

AUGUST, 1887.

The Congregational Review

IN WHICH ARE INCORPORATED

The Congregationalist and British Quarterly Review.

EDITED BY THE

REV. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A.

CONTENTS.

1. MODERN PREACHING AS AFFECTED BY MODERN THOUGHT. By Rev. G. S. BARRETT, B.A.
2. "THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING."
3. IS CHURCH PROPERTY PRIVATE PROPERTY?
4. SOME NEW VOLUMES OF POETRY. RUTH BRINDLEY.
5. CHURCH DICTIONARIES.
6. THE THEOLOGY OF MISSION EPOCHS.
7. DENOMINATIONAL NOTES.
8. THE STORY OF THE CROSS. By LYMAN ABBOTT.
9. A NEW NATIONAL PARTY.
10. EDITORIAL NOTES.
11. CURRENT LITERATURE.

London:

T. FISHER UNWIN,

26, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

One Shilling.]

[Monthly.

The Congregational Review.

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AUGUST, 1887.

MODERN PREACHING AS AFFECTED BY MODERN THOUGHT.*

BY REV. G. S. BARRETT, B.A.

THE subject on which I wish to address a few words to you this afternoon is "Modern Preaching as affected by the changes which have taken place in Theological Thought," and although I cannot hope to deal exhaustively with so large a subject—the discussion of the influence which the scientific doctrine of evolution has had on our interpretation of the Bible would, for example, demand a volume rather than a brief address, to be dealt with satisfactorily—I trust that a consideration of some of the more prominent characteristics of the preaching of the present day will not be altogether uninteresting or unprofitable to those of you whose chief work in life will be the preaching of the Gospel of the glory of God to your fellow-men.

When I speak of the changes which have passed over the preaching of the present day, I am not thinking of the alterations which have taken place in its literary form. There is no doubt the literary character of sermons has changed, and, as I think, changed very much for the better, during the last fifty years. Let any one take down a volume of sermons published to-day, and compare it with the sermons of any one of the best-known preachers of the past half-century—of Melville, or Angel James, or Raffles, or Parsons—and he will see at once how completely the style

* An Address to the students of the Lancashire Independent College, Manchester, delivered June 23, 1887.

and method and structure of our sermons have departed from the traditional rules of homiletics, and from the practice of the foremost preachers of former days.

Among Congregationalists, Mr. Binney, *clarum et venerabile nomen*, set an example, conspicuous from the massive personality of the man himself, of speaking to people about religious truth and practice in plain and unprofessional language. The objection John Foster urged against the evangelical preaching of his day, that it used a technical and artificial language in speaking of the most solemn and glorious realities of the faith—a habit that Foster maintained accounted for much of “the aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion”—does not certainly lie against the preaching of the present day. Our sermons have become secularized—I will not say in tone, but in language. A homelier and healthier style of address has taken the place of the elaborate and rounded Johnsonian periods which delighted our fathers half a century ago. The greatest preacher of this generation—perhaps the greatest preacher of any generation—once defined good preaching as good talking in the pulpit. I am inclined to think he was right.

But it is not to the changes in the form of our preaching I am anxious to refer: it is a more serious question I wish to discuss. I wish to inquire whether the message itself, as distinct from its method or manner of delivery, has been affected by recent speculation; and to endeavour to measure, in part at all events, the good and the evil, the gains and the perils, of some of the changes which may have been produced in modern preaching by the movements of thought around us.

And yet before dealing with this subject, there is a prior question that seems to me imperatively to demand settlement, and it is this—How far may preaching change without unfaithfulness to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? What are the limits of variation in the message consistent with fidelity to Him whose messengers we profess to be? To this question I, for my part, have but one reply. Any alteration in preaching that tampers with, or conceals, or

mutilates any of the great evangelical truths, is so far infidelity to Christ; or in other words, any message that does not speak all that Christ and His apostles spoke, is in danger of becoming, if it has not already become, "another gospel that is not another." The eternal verities of the gospel of Christ, those Divine facts, and that inspired interpretation of these facts, which are found in the history and teaching of our Lord and of His apostles; that gospel which the New Testament declares over and over again is the veritable "Word of God," the utterance of the eternal purpose and love of God—remain unchanged and unchangeable amid all the speculations of human thought; and it is at our peril we are unfaithful here. We have a message to declare which is not a discovery of man, but a revelation of God.

Outside, however, of these limits, there is room for the largest and freest play of the human intellect on the Divine message. Theology which is at once the product of the intellectual activity and the spiritual consciousness of the Church, can never remain a fixed science, simply because it is this play of the human spirit on the Divine message. Man's interpretation of the unchanging and unchangeable Word of God is sure to vary with the varying circumstances and culture and the spiritual vision of each successive age, and it is possible for the utmost fidelity to that Word to exist together with the utmost variety of its human apprehension. There may be many theologies, but there is only "one faith;" and as it is given to no one man to comprehend in all its fulness the mystery of the revelation of God in Christ, so it is given to no one age to exhaust the fulness of the meaning of that revelation. The controversies, the doubts, the heresies, the faiths, the sorrows, the mistakes, the triumphs of each successive age of the history of the Church, have all been a Divine discipline through which the Church has been led, often by stumbling and reluctant steps, into a larger and truer apprehension of "the truth as it is in Jesus." It is not an ignorant optimism, it is a simple statement of historic fact, to say that the conflicts and antagonisms which from time to time have arisen

between the faith of the Church and the ever advancing intellect of man, and which to those in the thick of the battle have too often seemed to be ending in the victory of error over truth, have been ultimately found to have been "the removal only of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not be shaken may remain." "The word of the Lord"—that word which is summed up and uttered in the revelation of God in Christ—"endureth for ever."

Having so far cleared the ground, let me ask you to consider the changes which have passed over modern preaching, so far as they are visible in three directions—changed conceptions of God, changed conceptions of Christ, and changed conceptions of man.

I. And first, as regards the changed conceptions of God which are manifest in the theology and the preaching of the present day.

The doctrine of the infinite love of God as embracing all men in its immeasurable greatness, is one of the clear and distinct gains theology has made during the last fifty years. The Calvinistic theology which was once dominant in our churches was shattered on this rock, the love of God for the whole world. I suppose there is hardly a pulpit in all England to-day where the explanation that a great preacher once gave to me of the text "God so loved the world," that it simply meant "God's judicial pity for the world," would not excite a wondering and incredulous smile. Our preaching has dwelt with ever growing emphasis on the wonder and blessedness of the love of God to all men, even to the most sinful and guilty. The hard and sharp lines which once divided the rectoral or judicial, and the paternal or loving, attributes of God, have altogether disappeared. Preachers build their most impassioned appeals to the sinner not on the terrors of the wrath to come, but on the unimagined and unimaginable greatness of the love of God to His sinful and wandering children. The infinite love occupies a large portion of the place which the moral authority of God once had in the proclamation of the gospel.

Nor is it without the profoundest significance that side by side with this larger and, I may add, truer conception of the heart of God, there has arisen all the wonderful fervour and activity of the modern missionary enterprise. The Church has always believed in the terrors of the Lord, but it needed a new and nobler faith to quicken the Church's zeal for the salvation of the whole world. When once the love of God in Christ was realized as a love that embraced all kindreds and nations and peoples in its infinite pity, it was inevitable that such a faith should be followed by a new zeal to make known to all men "the unsearchable riches of Christ." We recovered the apostolic conception of the love of God, and with it came the apostolic passion for the salvation of men.

All this is distinct gain to our preaching, but at the same time I question very much whether, in the reaction that has taken place against the severities of some parts of the Calvinistic creed, we are not now in danger of going into an opposite extreme of error and of degrading the Infinite Love into Infinite Good-nature. We may forget that if God is Love, His love is not only a love to all the children of men, but a love as infinite for righteousness and truth, and that such a love must be for ever hostile to those who will not turn from sin to serve Him. There are terrible words in the New Testament concerning the wrath of God, as well as the tenderest and most pitiful words of love which ever fell on mortal ears, and it is the former words I sometimes miss from the preaching of the present day. Even those who profess to believe in the "wrath of God," too often dilute it into anger against sin, as distinct from holy displeasure with the sinner; as if sin were an entity distinct from the sinner, and not in its inmost essence a personal will in rebellion against the infinite authority and love of God. We have ceased to talk very much "of the goodness and severity of God," for we have ceased to believe that the goodness of God can be severe with any one. There is a tone which has gone out of some of the preaching of the present day that has not gone out of the New Testament; and it has

gone because the supreme authority of God, His eternal right to the obedience and reverence and love of His creatures, are in peril of being forgotten in the exclusive proclamation of His infinite pity and love.

You may be sure that your preaching will gain nothing in permanent spiritual force by ignoring any of the facts of the revelation which God has given of Himself. Once let the moral majesty of God cease to be seen in your sermons, and the emotional and sentimental view of God take its place, and their backbone is broken for ever. I do not ask you to diminish by one sentence or by one word all you find it in your hearts to say of the greatness of the love of God, of His fatherly pity and yearning for all men, irrespective of their moral condition or their place in civilization; but I ask you to remember it is the greatness of that love that invests the authority of God with such tremendous terror to those who rebel against the one and despise the other.

II. But I must pass to a second illustration of the change that has passed over modern preaching as seen in the changed conceptions of Christ and of His redemptive work which are manifest in our day.

There is, first of all, a clear gain in the new reality and warmth given to the Humanity of the Lord Jesus. The progress of Biblical interpretation, the researches and discoveries which have taken place in Palestine, familiarizing the minds of Christian people with every scene and every detail connected with our Saviour's earthly history; the power of photography in bringing home to us the streets of Jerusalem, the homes of Nazareth, the fields around Bethlehem, the solitudes of the Jordan, the Lake of Galilee, fringed with its thickets of thorn and pink oleander flowers, where

All thro' the summer night
Those blossoms red and bright
Spread their soft breasts;

and, above all, a new and profounder conception of the solidarity of the human race, and of Christ Jesus as its Head and Representative, Himself "the Son of man," in

whom all the sons of men find their own humanity perfectly expressed and realized ;—all these causes have led to a fuller and richer conception of the true human nature and true human life of our blessed Lord.

For nearly a thousand years the Church had lost all living and practical consciousness of the humanity of Christ, and the man Christ Jesus who was “in all points made like unto His brethren,” who on the throne of His glory is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” had receded into a lonely and inaccessible glory, far away from the cry of the world, whence He should only again appear as its Judge and King. The result was inevitable. The adoration of the Virgin and the intercession of the Saints were created to fill the void caused by the loss of the humanity of Christ, and to make the shining steps up which man might climb to God. If the Reformation had done nothing else for Europe than restore to it the image of its Lord, human as well as Divine, it would have permanently enriched the thought and life of Christendom. For the first time, so far as I know, in the history of art, and in this generation, the consummate genius of a great artist has spent itself in telling on canvas the story of His human life of whom it was once said, “Is not this the carpenter?”

And yet this truer and fuller appreciation of our Lord's humanity, and of His organic relation to humanity, needs to be carefully watched, lest it should obscure our faith in His infinite majesty and glory.

Christ Jesus is not only our brother, the Son of man, but He is the Son of the Most High God, the personal revelation of the Eternal God in the flesh ; and we do not preach Christ if we allow our congregations ever to lose the vision of the unique and unapproachable relation which He bears to the Father as “the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance,” and of His regal exaltation to the right hand of God. If in the middle ages the sense of Christ's humanity was absorbed in the contemplation of His Divine glory, it is possible for us to go to the opposite error, and, in the warm and tender consciousness of His brotherhood, to forget that

He is also "God over all, blessed for evermore." It is not necessary to go to the Salvation Army for illustrations of apparent irreverence for His blessed Name. Some of our popular evangelistic hymns, and some of our popular evangelistic preaching, seem to me often to come perilously near an undue familiarity with Him of Whom the beloved disciple tells us, "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead."

But the change that has passed over the conception of the relation of Christ to humanity, is not more significant than the complete revolution that has taken place in the theological conception of His redemptive work. Not merely is the extent of the atonement as the one sacrifice for the sins of the world admitted on every hand, so that it would be simply impossible now to find any scientific theologian willing to discuss the question which excited so keen an interest amongst our forefathers, whether Christ died for the world or for the elect, but the whole theory of the atonement has undergone and is still undergoing large and radical change.

The commercial theory of the atonement, that Christ suffered so much suffering for so much sin—the most degrading conception ever applied to the infinite meaning of the death of the Son of God—has of course utterly perished; but side by side with it, the entire forensic theory, with its apparatus of legal imputation, has been slowly dying away. The unreality of the whole system was its doom. The conscience and the intellect alike revolted from a doctrine which appeared to imply that an artificial transfer of merit could take place between Christ and the sinner, and which, instead of satisfying the conscience and vindicating the righteousness of God, seemed itself to need vindication. That there was a profound spiritual truth beneath this theology of legal imputation—a truth it was struggling, however imperfectly, to express—and that any theology which is to be the theology of the future will have to reckon with this truth, and to take it up and in fairer and nobler forms embody it in its thought, I for one have no manner of doubt. Happily there are many indications

that it will be so. The fuller conception to which I have already alluded of the relation of Christ to the race as "the Son of man"; the deeper realization of the organic oneness of humanity; the discussions of the relation of society to the individual, and of the individual to society, to which our modern socialistic theories have given rise; the growing tendency of science to affirm the unity of the race; the vindication of vicarious sacrifice as at once the universal law and the noblest glory of human life; the yearning of the human conscience and the human heart for a perfect confession of its contrition for its sin, and for an ideal righteousness to which it may aspire;—all these things are indications that the foundations of the new philosophy of the atonement are already being laid, although for the time they are out of sight.

Nor is there anything to surprise or alarm us in the partial abandonment of the theories of the atonement once believed and preached by our fathers. That the death of Christ is the ground on which God remits human sin, is a fact, as Dr. Dale says, which has never been doubted through the whole history of the Christian Church, but the theological explanation of the fact has varied from age to age. The story of the past may lead us to view with perfect intellectual serenity the changes in the theology of the atonement which may be taking place in our own day. The Water of Life held in the vessels of human thought cannot but take its temporary form from the mould in which they are cast.

One feature, however, in the preaching of the cross of Christ in the present day, that I, for one, am not able to view with the comparative unconcern with which I regard all changes in the intellectual expression of Divine truth, is the prominence given to the subjective and moral elements in the death of Christ as distinct from its objective and expiatory significance before God. The power of the cross in affecting the relation of man to God is far more insisted upon in modern preaching than its power to change the relation of God to man. Preaching dwells with exceeding earnestness on the effect Christ's

death ought to have upon the sinner. I am not sure that it speaks as often of the prior question of its effect on God. It is in this direction I think I see an element of weakness, if not of grave peril, in some of the preaching of the present day. I speak only for myself, but I unhesitatingly tell you that if I have learnt anything from the practical work which comes to every Christian minister of dealing with souls under real conviction of sin, it is that the secret of the power of the cross of Christ over the conscience and heart of sinful men is its expiatory efficacy as the Divine sacrifice for human guilt. Nor am I alone in this experience. Only a fortnight ago I heard one of the most experienced missionaries from the East—a man who had spent more than twenty-five years in a mission to the Bhuddists, mainly of the higher class—declare at a public meeting, that never once in his experience had he known a Bhuddist won to Christ save by the deep satisfaction to the conscience afforded by the doctrine of the substitutionary death and atonement of Christ. “All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, but the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all;” “This is the gospel,” continued this missionary; “which again and again I have heard these Bhuddists say, ‘Here is what I need. If the Lord Jesus Christ did not die in my place, and as an atonement for my sins, then the gospel is no gospel to me.’”

I hope I shall not be thought presumptuous if I venture to affirm my own conviction that the subjective efficacy of the atonement mainly depends on the reality of its objective significance. If the preaching of Christ does not satisfy the human conscience, it will never satisfy the human heart: and I know of no gospel that can satisfy the conscience which does not first vindicate the moral equity of God in the pardon of sin. Forgiveness can never take the place of justification in our preaching without peril to the reality of forgiveness itself; and that preaching of the cross, my brethren, will reach the deepest springs of the moral life of man, will prove itself “the power of God unto salvation,” which has first learnt how “God can be FAITHFUL and

RIGHTEOUS to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

III. I have left myself too little time to speak as I should wish to speak on those changed conceptions of man which are manifest in the preaching of the present day.

The doctrine of the total and unrelieved depravity of the unsaved is silently abandoned in nearly all our pulpits. The doctrine appears it is true—among other places, in the thirteenth of the Articles of the Church of England, which declares "that works done before the grace of Christ have the nature of sin;"—but I question whether you could find any one seriously to maintain that the self-sacrificing love of a mother for her child, or the fidelity of a friend to his trust, or the incorruptible integrity of a man of business, if these are found in the unregenerate, are of the nature of sin, and *per se* are displeasing to God.

Even heathen virtues, those poor wild flowers of the grace of God so often trampled down by the hard feet of theological systems, those virtues which a great theologian once called "splendida vitia," are no longer dishonoured and denied; and it is now admitted that unregenerate men, whether in England, or China, or Africa, may nevertheless "do by nature the things of the law," and "show the work of the law written on their hearts."

So far, then, as we speak more truly, more justly, and, let me add, more scripturally, of the present moral state of man, it is well: for all exaggerations of the truth are sure to run into the opposite error; but is there no danger of the essential sinfulness of the human will in its God-ward relation being passed over too lightly in our modern preaching? God is not changed, and man is not changed, but do our congregations realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin as our forefathers did?

No doubt the currents of thought, more or less antagonistic to the Christian revelation, which are about us on every side, may have something to do with this weakened sense of human sin. A debased and materialistic philosophy, denying the greatness and reality of human freedom, and explaining mind in terms of matter; a

doctrine of evolution which makes man only the last term in a series of physical antecedents and consequents, and which, with its laws of heredity and environment, reduces human responsibility to a dream, may have something to answer for in the general lowering of the sense of sin: but I am inclined to think the chief cause is to be sought for elsewhere, in the conscience itself, in that relaxation of its moral fibre which always marks an age of luxurious civilization, and, above all, in the loss, to a great degree, of the sense of the supreme and awful authority of God over every human life—of which I have already spoken.

Suffer me to remind you, that you will fail in your work as preachers of the gospel if you fail to awaken in your hearers the deep, painful, but most salutary consciousness, that whatever human virtues man possesses, he is wrong, utterly wrong, with God. Beware of preaching sermons which leave behind them an impression that all that is needed for a Christian life is the development of the good that is in man. That there is good in man, some good even in the worst, I should be the last to deny—if there were no good there would be nothing to which Christ could appeal;—but it is He who saw all the good as well as all the evil in man who said, “ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

But for a preacher to speak of sin to his people, he must first have made the discovery of his own sin. It is only as we learn by communion with the Eternal Spirit the depth of our own sinfulness, we are taught how to speak to our fellow-men of theirs. A minister's preaching is always the direct product of his own spiritual life and thought; and if anything impairs the sensitiveness of our own conscience, if by neglect of prayer or indulgence in any sin the inward eye grows dim and blind, we shall be sure to show the spiritual deterioration of our own hearts in the unspiritual tone of our preaching.

Nor is it the doctrine of sin alone which will suffer if our own consciences have grown callous to its reality and guilt: sin and atonement are correlative terms, and an impaired sense of sin is sure to be followed by an impaired

doctrine of the Cross. Julius Müller, in that profound and searching work of his on "The Doctrine of Sin"—known to you all, the mastery of which forms an epoch in any student's mental history—says: "Everything in Christianity is connected more or less directly with the great facts of sin and of redemption; and the plan of redemption, which is the essence of Christianity, cannot be rightly understood until the doctrine of sin be adequately recognized and established." Yes! it is not the simple child of our Poet Laureate's exquisite poem who alone can say—

He taught me all the mercy, for He showed me all the sin.

All Christian theology, and all Christian experience, have been one long witness that a true philosophy of sin lies at the root of a true philosophy of the atonement.

But the changed conceptions in regard to man to which I have just referred as affecting the doctrine of sin, are even more manifest in the influence they have had on the doctrine of the future punishment of sin.

No part of Christian doctrine has received keener or more anxious discussion during the past ten years than Eschatology. It was inevitable it should be so. The Reformation left us many unsettled problems, and foremost among these was the doctrine of the last things. It may be too soon to say that the time has at length come when we may begin to construct an eschatology which shall unite all divergencies of opinion in one Catholic creed; but we may thankfully recognize the value of the materials for such a constructive process which are accumulating on every side. The larger and more critical study of the meaning of the terms of Holy Scripture; the careful discussion of that large class of passages which speak of life as inseparably connected with Christ, and seem to make immortality the direct gift of the Holy Spirit to the human soul; the juster weight given, not by universalists alone, but by theologians who differ most widely from them, to those scriptures which speak of the final triumph of the kingdom of God, when all things shall be "*summed up in Christ*," and all

things "*reconciled through Him*" to God; the admission by many of the most thoughtful and devout theologians of the double and opposing impossibilities which meet us in any doctrine of the final judgment on sin that we can frame; the impossibility, on the one hand, of thinking an eternity in which sin and suffering shall be eternally co-existent with Infinite Goodness and Infinite Love; and the impossibility, on the other hand, of affirming there is anything in death or future punishment to compel a rebellious will to submit itself to God; the recognition of the law that it is the tendency both of goodness and of evil always to run into fixed states; the gradual ripening of the conviction that a dogmatic universalism speaks to men in a different tone from that of Holy Scripture; the slow re-emergence of the doctrine of the Intermediate State in our Protestant theology, with the acknowledgment that in it is to be found the truth of which the Roman doctrine of purgatory is the corruption;—these are some of the ever-growing materials which may one day contribute to as final a settlement of the problem of the future punishment of sin as took place after the Nicene controversy on the Person of Christ.

I do not say it will be so. It may be that fuller and further discussion will end in the conclusion that Scripture and reason alike afford no certain solution of the mystery of eternal life or eternal death; that we are shut up in both cases to an insoluble antinomy; that the end of evil is as dark a mystery as its beginning, and that all we can do is to say, with the profound and saintly Vinet, when talking with Erskine of Linlathen on this great subject, "*La lumière me manque.*"

But it is to the practical influence of this discussion of future punishment on the preaching of the present day I wish to direct your attention. That it has largely influenced and modified modern sermons, no one can doubt.

You see its influence even in the preaching of those—still the majority amongst us—who hold to the orthodox doctrine of the eternity of future punishment. The material and ghastly forms which the preaching of Hell formerly assumed are impossible to day. The physical tortures of

the damned, common enough in mediæval sermons, are never heard of now. I doubt whether many congregations would bear such a sermon to-day as Jonathan Edwards's wonderful discourse on "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners." But the unconscious influence of these discussions on our preaching, I am afraid has not been wholly without evil results. Has there been no danger of our sermons losing somewhat of that solemn and searching tone we hear in the New Testament, and especially in the teaching of our Lord Himself? Has there been no subtle peril to each of us of softening the dark shadows of the Bible, and of saying as little as possible, perhaps nothing at all, of the terrors of the judgment to come?

Perhaps you may say that in the present unsettlement of thought on this most solemn of all subjects, it is difficult, if not impossible, for a young minister to formulate any view of the future state of the wicked which will at once satisfy his own conscience and bear preaching about. I fully recognize the difficulty. God forbid that I should ask any one of you to commit yourselves hastily, even in the desire to preach the whole counsel of God, to any theory which will break down under the test of your maturer strength and thought. Nothing is less to be desired either for a minister or for his congregation than that he should be avowing changes of belief with any degree of frequenceny in the pulpit: least of all on the more momentous subjects of the Christian revelation. But I do ask for a place in your preaching—aye! and in your prayers too—for the darker and more solemn side of the gospel of Christ. You cannot get rid of such terrible words as "the wrath to come," "a certain and fearful looking for of judgment and fiery condemnation," "weeping and gnashing of teeth," and kindred terms, from the New Testament. The menaces of the gospel are as real as its promises; and it is no excuse for any minister passing in silence over this side of the teaching of Christ and His apostles that he has not yet found his own solution of the tremendous problem of the future state of the ungodly. At least he has found this—if he be a true minister of

Jesus Christ—absolute, complete, constant submission to the authority of Christ; and it is Christ Himself, and not he, who is responsible for the shadows cast by the infinite light of the love of God on the doom of the wicked.

It is not often any of us are near enough to God to preach about "the second death." Better never to say one word about it than to speak of it in professional speech, with an unmoved heart and frozen words. There is such a thing as "a tear in the voice" which comes from the deep solicitudes of the heart for the unsaved, but those solicitudes come to us only in the most sacred moments of our own fellowship with Christ. It is when we realize the infinite wonder and glory of the love of God, the passion of God for the salvation of men, that we go forth from His presence with the burden of human sin and unbelief most heavily pressing on us. It was after St. Paul's triumphant vision of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord—that lyrical outburst of exulting song which closes the eighth chapter of the Romans—that he utters the pathetic words, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Ghost, that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were *anathema* from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh." And it is when we stand in the light of that same love, the Love that stooped from the infinite glory to bear the burden and shame of human sin, we shall understand something at least of St. Paul's heart when he said, "For many walk of whom I have told you often, and tell you now even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is perdition."

And now, gentlemen, I have done. You are preparing in this place for the noblest service to which God can call a human soul—the service of the Christian ministry. I know no work on earth so fitted and so capable of evoking and employing all the best and fullest powers of a man's whole nature, than the work of a Christian minister; but it is on condition that a man puts his whole nature into the service of his Master—intellect, heart, will, body, soul, all—

that he holds nothing back, but consecrates himself utterly and completely to Christ. I ask you this day to remember the measure of your future success—success not as the world will measure it, but success as it will be determined at the judgment seat of Christ—will depend mainly on the fervency and depth of your own consecration to Christ. No natural endowments, however rich, no fulness of intellectual culture, however ample, will compensate for the absence of personal vision of the truth, personal knowledge of Christ.

It will be as you know Christ for yourselves, as you see the glory of God in His face, as you come forth from communion with Him, that you will discover the secret of power in your ministry. God only knows how long that ministry may be for each one of you; but whether long or short, I pray that you and I, and all who are here to-day, when we pass "beyond those voices where is peace," may receive the welcome—more than enough reward for all the toil and all the sorrows of this mortal life—"Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

"THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING."

SHORT stay we make in this fair World of ours:
Time, swift and silent, steals our days and hours,
Bearing us near, and nearer, Death's dim shore;
What then? To be with Christ for evermore?
To rest in Heaven? To lay our burdens down?
To wear the white robe and the victor's crown?
Lord, help us from this taint of self that clings
Even to our dreams of Heaven,—our holy things!

What is it to be with Thee? All too brief
This life will seem, if in Earth's wail of grief
We hear Thy call, of our own will to share
The heavy burden Thou for love dost bear.
Dear is the Earth to us, sacred and great
Her beauty, even in her fall'n estate;
Dear is Thy world to Thee. Dwells purer bliss
In other worlds than helping Thee in this?

O Lord, our life,—forgive us that our eyes,
Sin-blinded, set Thee in the far-off skies,
When to our own hearts Thou wilt come, and stay,
Would self but stand aside, and give Thee way.

Then cleanse anew Thy temple. Come, indeed,
To dwell within us, for the world's sore need
Cries for Thy second coming in Thine own ;
Gladly we yield our hearts to be Thy throne,
Nor pine for rest and bliss beyond the grave.
What matter if we suffer—so Thou save
Thy children from the bitter ways of sin ?
Or what if we be weary—so Thou win
Thy wanderers to Thine arms ? Make us Thy voice !
Reach thro' our hands to heal ! In us rejoice
Or suffer—all our powers are only Thine.
Light of the World ! even thro' our dimness shine.

Can dying bring Thee nearer ? Once set free,
Thy face, O Christ, in glory shall we see ?
Deep lies the Hope,—yet, here or otherwhere,
This be our Heaven, Thy life of Love to share.

A. W.



IS CHURCH PROPERTY PRIVATE PROPERTY ?

In a clever and amusing story of the day, in which it seems to be the writer's object to give us the ideas which are floating in society on sundry questions which are within the range of practical politics, there is a reference to the subject of Church property which deserves the attention of those who hope to settle the dispute by appeal to time-honoured British prejudices which are always relied on by the defenders of privilege as their strongest line of entrenchment. The speaker is a young Radical member of Parliament, an Oxford man, who, we suppose, must have left the university before the new wave of Unionism had swept away whatever Liberalism might once have been found there. "You," he says to a vicar with whom he is discussing, "enjoy your tithes only by the goodwill of

society, and I think you'll find it very hard to prove that you've a right to them because an old priest-ridden baron made a bequest to the priory of Lorton seven hundred years ago. The sacredness of bequest is all nonsense." This is putting the objection to the arguments on which so much ingenuity has been expended in a nutshell. It is found in a work of fiction, partly because it is not everybody who could put the case in such epigrammatic form; and still more because, rare as is the skill, still more rare is the courage necessary to so daring an attack upon institutions so venerated. When the struggle comes, there will be numbers to propound this view on the political platform. For the present, it is only in this indirect manner, in a book of fiction, that it is propounded. Even there, however, it is an indication that the world is not imposed upon by the elaborate reasonings which Lord Selborne has endorsed with the sanction of his great name and legal authority.

"The sacredness of bequest is all nonsense." This sounds like a daring heresy, but it is only the utterance of common sense, and of common sense which can point to a large number of historic precedents in its favour. The idea that a man who happens to be in possession of a large domain has a right to determine how its revenue shall be applied, not simply for the next generation or for the generation to follow that, but for all generations, to the end of time, is, when taken to pieces and carefully examined, so grotesque that it is hard to understand how it has ever found acceptance. A great landowner may become possessed of an entire county; he may die childless; and in the intensity of his zeal for some crotchet of his own he may appropriate the entire property to the support of his pet idea. The object may not be positively harmful; it may be a mere whim which the world ridicules for its absurdity, but which can hardly be said to be good or bad, beneficial or mischievous, in itself—simply an eccentricity of a weak, or fanciful, or distempered brain; yet the entire product of a great estate is to be for ever devoted to the gratification of a mere caprice. In the name of the "sacredness of bequest," the country is to be for ever de-

prived of a considerable portion of its revenue. Of course it will be said that in such a case the State would interfere. This undoubtedly is so, but then what becomes of the grand principle perpetually invoked on behalf of the Establishment and its enormous revenue?

It is not necessary, however, to ask what would become of this principle in some hypothetical case. The history of the Anglican Church is marked by a series of violations of the very maxim on which the argument of its defenders rests. Whenever the real conflict comes, there can be little doubt that among the doughty champions of the Establishment who will appeal to this great constitutional principle on its behalf, there will be some who owe their own exalted position in the State to property alienated from the Church and bestowed upon their ancestors, in flagrant defiance of the very law which they now quote in opposition to the claims of the nation as a whole. The confiscation of the wealth of monasteries and other ecclesiastical foundations by Henry VIII. was a high-handed assertion of the rights of the State, but those by whom it is condemned should at least be free from any participation in the spoils. It is superfluous to say that some of the proudest families in England were enriched by them, and their representatives to-day ought, in common consistency, either to surrender the estates so unjustly acquired, if the "sacredness of bequest" is to be held an inviolable principle, or for ever to cease the babble about the rights of the Establishment to its own property. So far as it has any rights at all, they extend quite as much to the large estates which have been converted into aristocratic demesnes as to those which are in the hands of the National Church at present.

But have such rights any validity at all? Some of the clergy have at least a virtue which may possibly stand them in good stead in the controversy. They will admit nothing; indeed, there is no position, however simple it may appear, which they will not at once challenge. Writing in *The Nineteenth Century* for December, in reply to an assertion of the Right Hon. J. G. Hubbard that

Church property, of whatever kind or period (with the exception of two millions granted by the State for church-building), stands upon precisely the same footing, we described the conditions under which many of these mediæval endowments were created.

Here, for example, is an endowment which was created in the mediæval period, and which bears in almost every clause of the deed by which it was created traces of the religious ideas which were at that time held by the entire nation. Among other requirements it specially provides for the saying of masses for the soul either of the donor, or of some of his kindred or friends, in memory of whom the bequest was made.

The statement had no reference to any specific case. It was of the most general character, and, in truth, seemed to us about as safe and unquestionable as a statement that the sun rose over the villages of Sussex yesterday morning. That endowments were left for the saying of masses, which have passed into the hands of a Church which pronounces masses blasphemous and idolatrous, seemed to us as certain a proposition as the axiom that the whole is greater than a part. But we were immediately assailed by a letter from a clergyman demanding proof. What was challenged and needed to be sustained by definite evidence, it was not easy to conjecture. Surely not that the mediæval Church believed in masses for the dead, and accepted endowments to provide for their being offered in perpetuity. Possibly it might be the suggestion that in the large mass of endowments enjoyed by the English Church there are some which were originally intended for a service which the Anglican Church had not only disused but expressly condemned. We should have thought the one statement could be denied as little as the other. If it is certain such endowments once existed, what has become of them? Is it to be assumed that they have all gone into the pockets of the lay spoliators, most of whom would now be stout defenders of the noble doctrine of the "sacredness of bequest;" or is it not a matter of common notoriety that a large proportion of them is included in the revenue of the Church, which

proclaims in its Articles the unscriptural nature of the function for which they were originally appropriated?

The incident is interesting chiefly as indicating the desperate nature of the conflict in which the clerical defenders of the "private property" theory are engaged, and the character of the expedients to which they are compelled to have recourse. They have their own ideas of logic and of history, and those who venture to propound the views which are current among intelligent men are treated as belonging to the people who know nothing. As to the particular statement referred to, it was, after all, only an illustration of a general argument which it is impossible to controvert. It may be maintained, greatly to the satisfaction of a certain school of ecclesiastical theorists, that a Church which celebrated masses as one of the highest functions of public worship and a Church which treats them as idolatrous corruptions of Christianity are one and the same Church; but, at all events, it is a fact that before the Reformation these masses were celebrated in the self-same cathedrals and churches wherein they were afterwards denounced. That is really all which it is necessary to establish on this point.

The particular change referred to is only one example of the innumerable changes in teaching, in ritual and in spirit, which were made at the Reformation. To say that the Church which has passed through such a revolution remains the same Church, is an insult to our understanding; to assert that the revolution was effected by the Church itself, of its own authority and its own free will, is simply to contradict all the facts of history. These Anglicans, with all their protestations and all their learning, have not yet succeeded in convincing any one who was not desirous to persuade himself into the belief. We have never heard of a convert to the view outside the charmed circle of Anglicanism itself. Within the Establishment there are numbers who would laugh the theory to scorn, and outside there is an unbroken chorus of scornful unbelief. This, of course, is no reason why its advocates should doubt their infallibility. It is the glorious privilege of privileged classes in this country to be assured that they are right, though every

impartial voice throughout the civilized world should pronounce them wrong. Especially if their theory be endorsed by an authority so eminent as Lord Selborne, must it be accepted as the truth. Who ever heard of a Chancellor so distinguished being mistaken? Nevertheless the record is there, and the common sense of men must exercise itself on the interpretation. What the conclusion will be there can be little doubt. If, when this great question is submitted for the arbitrament of the English people, the Church of England has no stronger plea than this "sacredness of bequest," and the argument is that some mediæval baron who left his money to endow a priory, meant it to be used for the good of a Church which has swept priories and monks away; or that some gallant crusader who hoped to secure the intercession not only of the saints in heaven, but also of the Pope and priests on earth, and in order to obtain it left his estates, or a considerable portion of them, as the priests directed, with the condition that masses should be said for his soul, intended to enrich a Church which has repudiated the Pope, which knows nothing of a large number of the saints, and which expressly forbids the saying of masses, the result of this appeal cannot be doubtful.

In truth the question has already been settled. Again and again has the State treated this "sacredness of bequest" as a mere figment, and dealt with this ecclesiastical estate as a fund which is to be used not in accordance with the wishes of barons and crusaders of the middle ages, but to meet the wants of the people of to-day. It was not a Protestant feeling which caused the first interference of this kind; but the conviction, wrought by facts, that it was not for the well-being or even the safety of the nation, that there should be an unrestrained licence of bequest to the Church. The Statutes of Mortmain, which were passed from time to time, are a lasting expression of the jealousy with which the accumulation of property in the hands of those who did not render due service to the State, was regarded by all wise and patriotic legislators. The feeling was not an unreasonable one. Mr. Green tells us that in the fourteenth century the clergy were said to own in landed

property alone more than a third of the soil, while their "spiritualities" in dues and offerings amounted to more than twice the king's revenue. In this there was, of course, exaggeration. The historian speaks of these reports of clerical wealth as "wild tales," but they had at least so much foundation in fact that they created the feeling which made Wiclif's appeals so telling, and were the cause of the repeated attempts to put an arrest, by means of legislation, upon a process which was placing so large a portion of the land under the control of the "dead hand."

Is it wonderful that this alarm should have been excited, or are the statesmen to be condemned who regarded this absorption of land by the Church as nothing short of a national calamity, and took strong measures to prevent the extension of a growing evil? Grant that the rumours which we have quoted above were exaggerated; that not on one-third, but on one-sixth, or even on one-tenth of the land of the country was the mark of consecration. But if any proprietor on whom priests were able to bring the artillery of spiritual coercion to play with its ordinary result was free to add his estate to the vast demesne already possessed by the Church, that property might be indefinitely extended. The tenth might become a quarter, a third, a half—nay, where was the limit to be placed? So far, indeed, did the evil spread, despite all attempts to restrict it, that the extensive confiscation of property which took place at the time of the Reformation still left the Anglican Church endowed beyond most of its fellows. That confiscation was effected in the most harsh and arbitrary manner. It was due not so much to religious sentiment as to State policy and private greed, and yet there are few thoughtful men who would condemn it because of its being an interference with the rights of private property. It is possible to blame the rude violence of the king and the grasping avarice of his courtiers, to condemn the agents who carried out the spoliation of the monasteries, and the plunderers who profited by the spoil; and yet to hold that the State was only exercising its righteous prerogative, and exercising it wisely, when it refused to recognize the right of men

who had lived centuries before to appropriate the estate of which they had become possessed to purposes which pleased themselves, but which the nation had come to regard as superstitious and mischievous. There was robbery, no doubt, but it was robbery of the nation which was the lawful heir of what had been taken from the monks and the Church.

Defenders of the "private property" theory conveniently ignore the bearing of this extensive alienation of Church lands at the Reformation. The holders of these confiscated estates are, for the most part, great nobles who are conspicuous as champions of the Establishment, and it would not be desirable to offend them by insisting on restitution. We remember a story written by an ecclesiastically-minded author, the hero of which became greatly troubled in conscience because his estate included the property of which some monastery had been dispossessed; and he found no rest until he had undertaken the work of restitution. But the idea of such restitution is not a popular one, and if it be once seen that it is the necessary corollary of the doctrine that the ecclesiastical estate is the private property of the Church, it is not the Liberation Society alone which will be the strenuous opponent of the doctrine.

Lord Selborne insists that the great ecclesiastical buildings of the country are "monuments of the Christian zeal of many generations of Churchmen. Words are inadequate to express the feelings of affection and reverence with which they are generally regarded by Churchmen." This is perfectly true, but it has so little relevance to the argument he is conducting, that had a counsel pleading before him indulged in a similar mixture of commonplace and ambiguity, his lordship might have been expected to pull him up almost with as much sharpness as he adopts when lecturing his quondam friend and leader. That word "Churchman" is deliciously vague, and singularly misleading for the uneducated mind, on which it is meant to impose. There are multitudes of people in this country who attach to it only one signification, and forget,

if they ever knew, that it has had and may still have another. When they hear that the great cathedrals were built by "Churchmen," they at once rush to the conclusion that these noble buildings were the work of people like themselves—who prided themselves on not being vulgar and perhaps disloyal people like Dissenters round about them, or victims of superstition like their Roman Catholic neighbours—good, honest Churchmen, without Popish fads or Nonconformist anarchy, who loved established ways of pleasing God! The use of the word is really a practical pre-judgment of the whole question, for "Churchman" has come to have a meaning with us of which it is very difficult for men to disabuse themselves. It would have been far more true to fact to say that they are monuments of the zeal of many generations of Englishmen. They belong, for the most part, to a period when the term Churchman as opposed to Dissenters was unknown, and the men who built them were the ancestors both of the Churchmen and Dissenters of the day. We have both wandered from the paths in which they were accustomed to walk, and we Dissenters have gone further apart than Churchmen, but we both have a common heritage in them and their work, for it was the work of Englishmen. So when Lord Selborne goes on to speak of "the feelings of affection and reverence" with which Churchmen regard them, does he suppose that these are not shared by Dissenters? It is only necessary for him to refer to Mr. Frederic Harrison's article on the "desecration of sacred buildings," and to his singularly eloquent protest against the giving up of Westminster to Mr. Banting and his army of workmen, for him to see that these feelings are shared by men who have gone outside the pale even of Christianity itself. "Churchmen" have many exclusive privileges, but they have not a monopoly of reverence and awe, of love for the beautiful, or susceptibility to historic impression. The hearts of Englishmen beat under the modest garb of Dissenters, as well as under the gorgeous vestments with which the archbishops lent additional "pomp and circumstance" to the Jubilee ceremonial. As we sat in that historic minster, the men and

events of the distant age when it was reared, and the following centuries in which it played so memorable and prominent a part, seemed to pass in review before us. If it were possible for one who has honourably forced his way up to "the caste of Vere de Vere," and seems to have caught only too easily and too soon its spirit of exclusiveness, to forget for a moment that insular prejudice—nowhere more thoroughly narrow and insular than when associated with the ecclesiastical sentiment which is supposed to sanctify it—that prevents its victims from understanding the position of others, Lord Selborne might be able to appreciate the feeling which sprung up unbidden in our breasts, and made us ask ourselves, Why are we here as exiles and outcasts? If this be the private property of one amidst our many religious communities, it certainly does not belong to that Church which at present is in possession. The gorgeous copes themselves recall another and very different style of service for which this building was clearly erected. We seem to see the stately procession of lordly prelates and cowled monks winding slowly round its majestic aisles; the odours of the incense are diffusing themselves over the vast edifice, the strains of the *Miserere* are echoing in our ears. How can it be that this noble Abbey is the private estate of a Church to which these splendid ceremonials are so alien that its endeavours after them are of the nature of travesty, which knows neither monk, nor mass, nor incense, and which, while it arrogates to itself the title of "Catholic," is in every one of its features distinctly English. Such a Church can only hold it at all on the ground that the nation has established it and placed in its hands this building because it is the property, not of any section of the people, not even of that which holds the doctrines and observes the ceremonial of those by whom it was built, but of the nation itself.

Lord Selborne appears to think that the case is proved if he is able to show that these cathedrals and venerable parish churches were the gift of individuals.

We know (he says) the names of the bishops and other great Churchmen who, chiefly out of their own resources, or those of the

corporations with which they were connected (not, however, without frequent aid from lay contributors), built the cathedrals of Canterbury, York, Durham, Winchester, Ely, Lincoln, Lichfield, Wells, Exeter, Worcester, Norwich, Hereford, Rochester, and other cities. Bishop Poore built Salisbury Cathedral partly out of his own means, partly by the aid (recorded by the old chronicler, Matthew Paris) of many of the nobles of the realm and of King Henry III., who laid the foundation stone and was present at the consecration. Westminster Abbey was twice rebuilt by King Edward the Confessor and Henry III.*

But what does this prove? Surely not that the cathedrals belong to a Church which has renounced the authority of the Pope, which these donors acknowledged, and which has changed the whole character of the service which is celebrated in the buildings which they reared. The bishops who built these churches, and those who preside over them to-day, may both be called "Churchmen;" but the Church of to-day owns a different head, and speaks with another voice, than that of the middle ages. As to the royal founders or restorers, their action seems to have been of a more directly public character; and this inference is confirmed by the fact that when we come down to later days, when public funds were voted by Parliament, not bestowed by kings, St. Paul's Cathedral was built out of the coal dues of the City. May not Edward the Confessor have been acting in a public capacity as the Parliament of Charles II. did afterwards? Without, however, laying any undue stress on this point, and looking solely at the Episcopal donors, are we expected to believe that they would have regarded with satisfaction a Church which had repudiated all allegiance to the Pope, and which substitutes English liturgy for the Romish mass, and, what would probably have been even worse in their estimation, is thoroughly Erastian in its constitution? The question could not have presented itself to them and it would be absurd to make any confident assertion as to how they would have looked at it had it suggested itself to their mind. All that can be said is, that they must have passed through an entire revolution in thought and feeling before they could have acquiesced in

* "Defence of the Church of England," p. 113.

such a transformation of their Church, and, as a necessary consequence, of the objects to which their gifts were appropriated.

In many cases it is evident from Lord Selborne's own statements that there has been a distinct diversion of buildings and endowments from their original purposes. They may have been kept within the Church itself and retained for ecclesiastical uses (even this latter statement, however, needing considerable qualification); but this is hardly sufficient to satisfy the conditions on which bequests of private property are held. Dr. Freeman and others have taken great pains to make us understand that the Church, as one great corporation, holds no estate; but that the endowments which constitute her property were given to the separate corporations, scattered up and down through the kingdom, of which the Church of England is composed. Then, even though the continuity of the Church should be proved, it avails nothing to justify the extraordinary fashion in which the property has been handled. Here is an example :

Other splendid churches, formerly conventional, were made parish churches on the dissolution of the monasteries—among them, Southwell, Beverley, and Wimborne minsters; St. Alban's, Tewkesbury, Evesham, Malmesbury, Sherborne, Romsey, Christ Church, Waltham, Howden, and Selby abbeys. They had been erected by the founders or superiors of the religious houses to which they originally belonged, as cathedrals were (generally) by their bishops.*

We hardly need more than this to prove our case. Here, on Lord Selborne's own showing, are a number of magnificent buildings erected and endowed by the heads of great monastic houses. Will any one pretend that these are the private property of a Church in which no place is found for monks and their houses? It can scarcely be argued that the monastic system and its appendages were matters of secondary importance to which the maxim *de minimis non curat lex* applies. The monk was a conspicuous and characteristic feature of the old Church, and the convent was one of its most efficient instruments. The wealth with

* "Defence of the Church of England," p. 114.

which these religious houses were endowed is itself one of the most convincing proofs of the power which they wielded. That a Church which has swept them away altogether, and which treats the ideas on which they were based as vain superstitions, is the same Church as that in which they were so mighty a force, is a proposition which will hardly be received by any except those whose prejudices and interests lead them to regard it as a foregone conclusion.

But this does not exhaust our argument. These endowments were for monasteries ; how have they come to be appropriated to parishes ? This, indeed, would hardly be a correct statement of facts. In some of these cases, the parishes have had little more than the stately edifices left them, the rest of the property having passed into the hands of chapters, or colleges, or even of great aristocratic houses. In others, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have laid hold of those endowments which had escaped the spoilers of the sixteenth century, and have thrown them into a general fund, to be used as the necessities of the Church may require. All that may be very right and expedient. About that point it is not necessary for us to say anything here. Our contention is only that it is utterly inconsistent with the theory of the private character of these endowments.

(*To be continued.*)



SOME NEW VOLUMES OF POETRY.*

THREE of the volumes before us curiously and graphically illustrate the search of the human soul for God through

* *The Purpose of the Age.* By JEANIE MORISON. (Macmillan & Co.) *Through Dark to Light.* By A. EUBULE EVANS. (Wyman & Sons.) *St. Augustine's Holiday, and Other Poems.* By W. ALEXANDER, D.D. (C. Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.) *A Modern Apostle.* By CONSTANCE C. W. NADEN. (C. Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.) *Sonnets of Nature and Science.* (By S. JEFFERSON, F.R.A.S. (T. Fisher Unwin.) *The Love Affair.* By W. W. ALDRED. (G. Redway.) *Songs of Heaven and Earth.* Second Edition. By NEWMAN HALL. (J. Nisbet & Co.)

all the ages, its yearning to be satisfied only by infinity, its cry ringing across the centuries for something higher than happiness and more lasting than success.

Miss Morison, in "The Purpose of the Ages," takes us back to the early history of the world, when young Abram turns in despair from his father's gods seeking a better; the Bishop of Derry carries on the thread of the tale in "St. Augustine's Holiday, and other Poems," where two of the great saints of old, Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux, re-echo the cry for divinity in no feeble strain; and Eubule Evans, in "Through Darkness to Light," gives us the modern version of the story and its sublime, satisfying conclusion.

Introduced by Professor Sayce, and with so many valuable historical and literary notes, we are not left in doubt as to whether we may take on trust the truth of this extremely interesting, beautiful, and instructive poem of Miss Morison's. We are assured of its scholarly accuracy by no less an authority than the great Egyptologist himself, and so may give ourselves up to its enjoyment without a fear that truth is being sacrificed to art. We are not sure but that more importance will be attached to the historical side of the book than to its literary and poetic. Perhaps it is a little too weightily learned to flow freely in verse; the ideas are greater than the execution—clear, concise, and masterly as this is. The writer has so much to say that she is burdened by it—a welcome burden, truly, of exact knowledge and noble thought, but still a burden which hinders and hampers the poetry. Her Pegasus moves with too wooden a gait; with pauses too frequent to take breath. She is never carried away in a fiery enthusiasm of thought. Her sentences, though clear and vigorous, with never an unnecessary word, nor an idea over-strained, are too short and abrupt. But we are charmed by a succession of pictures of marvellous beauty, elevating by their pure religious tone, and instructive in their truth. The book will repay a close study, and we can promise the intelligent reader a very keen intellectual pleasure. Its purpose, as Professor Sayce tells us in the preface, is visible on every page.

Beginning with Abram as representing the "Childhood" of the faith of the world, when it first began dimly to "feel after God if haply it might find Him," to turn eager eyes to the light which had been with it, uncomprehended, from its creation, we are led on to the later development of faith in the life of Moses, till we stand in the dawning of the perfect day when love solved the riddle of the ages, and man found the meaning of his own life expressed in the Cross on Calvary.

The poem is divided into three parts; the first, entitled "Faith (Childhood)," describes with marvellous beauty and unerring strength of touch Abram's early home in Ur of the Chaldees. We see the young boy sorely perplexed and troubled by bloody sacrifices to the gods his own hands had helped to fashion in the home of his father, Terah, the "image-maker." We see him in the tomb stretched beside the dead, listening tremblingly in vain for the answer of the gods to the agonized entreaties of the seer, and our hearts beat in sympathy with his as he watches, with eyes of horror, the sacrifice of the first-born and hears the bodeful chant—

The head of the child for his own head;
The brow of the child for his own brow;
The breast of the child for his own breast.

And the young seeker after God turns away with despair in his heart, and yet an unsatisfied longing. Thus it is in the beginning of time; so now at the end of the centuries here and there, amid the materialism of the world and the ceaseless grind of its pleasure and its work, some heart is touched with the sacredness of life, some spirit is caught up into communion with the Highest, some soul is bowed in worshipping silence as it recognizes the presence of the Holy.

Book II., "Fealty (Youth)," brings vividly before us Moses, brought up in kings' palaces, learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians, cunning in counsel, skilled in war, endowed with all the most brilliant gifts of manhood.

A young, bright life with noble destinies,
Writ on the candid brow and eye intense,
The index of a soul that dwells afar
On untried heights, within the mystic veil
That shrouds the far Unseen.—A boy Nature
Herself hath chose and consecrate to know
The hidden mysteries and rule 'mong men.

In mountain solitudes, in the awful silences of nature, he learnt his life's mission, to be wrought out in fierce spiritual strife with the forces of his own soul, in grim fighting with evil, in long watchings, prayers, and temptations, at last to end in seeming failure and in unknown death. But man's failures are God's successes; the proud will was bent, subdued, and then merged in the Divine, the lofty wisdom bowed in reverent homage, and the whole self of the man God-filled, God-irradiated, God-sanctified. Failure? Then so may we all fail!

Book III. is devoted to the realization of "The Purpose of the Ages" in the Person of Christ. It does not strike us as being equal to the others. It is almost as if the writer had tired of her work before the close, and instead of rising to the glory of this glorious fulfilment of the ages, we are conscious of a fall to a lower level of imagination, feeling, and thought.

"Seekers after God" are not confined to the Abrams, the Moses, the Senecas, of ancient days. The passionate cry goes out still from the midst of our modern life of progress, "Tell me where I may find Him," from the lips of men fighting with sterner problems than those which perplexed young Abram's faith. It is this cry which again finds earnest, eloquent utterance in this beautiful series of short poems with the appropriate title, "Through Dark to Light." It would be difficult to speak too highly of this book, or too respectfully of it as revelation of a noble soul struggling with all the dark riddles of destiny, now overcome, now rising into new light, and again cast down into the lower mists of earth, till it rests triumphantly at last in the smile of God. The tale is not new, nor the experience. How many of us have had to fight our battle in the wilderness of doubt, and, perchance, have come out to

To find a stronger faith our own ;
And Power was with us in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone. (Tennyson.)

The difficulties of these thinkers of old were not so deeply subtle as those confronting us to-day, in proportion as their lives were simpler, and their hearts more trustful. *Their* chief difficulty was to explain natural physical surroundings; *ours* is to find a sufficient reason for *being* at all.

Our life unriddled remains,
However we wag our tongues,
And the issue of all our pains
Is to lift the latch of the lungs.

(Perhaps our more simple ancestors did not close their lungs by "latches.")

In the first poem, "The Parrot," perhaps the finest in the book, we are met by the same old questions which will recur again and again so long as there is a tongue to ask them, and which ever go unanswered. What is the use of the world going on through its millions of years, developing its higher races whose higher organisms but make them at best more fully sensitive to pain; why was the world created at all; and why, oh why, was *I* created, this Ego, with its undefined wants, its infinite pains, and fears and sorrows, its small modicum of joy, and even that an illusion? How do I know that I am not a person in somebody else's dream, to disappear into thin air at his awaking, like other delusions of the night? Nay, how do I know that *I* am not dreaming, and the places I yesterday saw so fair are in reality *no*-where? How far are we accountable for our actions, we who bear taints in blood and seeds of evil from a long ancestry of sin, we who are compelled to think, to feel, to be, along certain specific lines laid down unconsciously in habits formed by a long-past race? Have not all things that *are* their root in selfishness; is not love a dream, and goodness merely refined self-interest?

Vainly we chatter and jest,
And vainly our fancy dreams

That rays from some Land of Rest
 Shoot through the gloom that gleams.
 Our nimble fingers in vain
 Play joggle with time and space ;
 They weave no spell for our pain,
 They charm no cloud from the face.

Oh ! teach us the measured swing,
 The monotonous to and fro,
 The patient ride in the ring
 Of recurrent earthly woe . . .

But here in the doubtful land we were not meant to stay,
 and the questioner in "The Parrot" is wooed in "The
 Woman" from his riddle of fate to dreams of love.

And yet, as the flowers that fleet
 Are the chiefest joys of our eyes,
 Perchance thy love is so sweet
 Because it so quickly dies.

Love too, he thinks, is hewn from "the quarry of dreams" ;
 love itself is deceit, and life is vanquished by death. It is
 not till he passes on to know love's truth in wife and child,
 that he learns to trust Love Everlasting for hidden meanings
 and unsolved mysteries.

Though the rules of life be hard,
 And the mercy of man but strained,
 There is joy for the most ill-starred
 When the golden gates are gained.

The earth is not all our aim ;
 And clay is but Time's dull dress,
 And God will better the blame
 In the everlastingness.

"The Child" and "The Wife" are beautiful with tender
 thought, with their radiances of love, and full, satisfying
 joy. The perfect being—man, wife, child, stands before us,
 the human image of the Divine, the stamp of the Godhood
 on our imperfect manhood, the temple wherein God taber-
 nacles with men.

And so we pass on to the conclusion of the whole matter;

man, complete in his own nature, must yet have something beyond his nature, and he finds it in the God-Man, Christ Jesus. In "The Christ Picture" we touch the farthest limit of blessedness; the weary questioner has the golden key at last, love crowned with its thorns of sacrifice, love, the secret of life, the revelation of death. Science, philosophy, fail to satisfy the restless heart; the Cross, the symbol of service, the type of life, where love is perfected, and suffering sublimed, must draw all men unto it.

For this much at the least our purblind sight
Discerns amid the tumult and the stress—
That love must ever link itself with light
Ere it be truly competent to bless.
The more of earth we earth-born mortals know,
The more will dawn upon us of earth's God,
And ever nearer our glad feet will go
To that straight path He for our guidance trod;
For matter, made by God is not accursed;
And love is not less love when shaped by laws;
And this our life would be of all things worst,
If consequence unerring dogged not cause.

Among the "Seekers for God," none sought and found with a fuller blessedness of reward than the man whose name gives title to this book.* The "Holiday" here described occurred when Augustine, in failing health, had renounced his profession as a teacher of rhetoric, and retired to the country house of a friend for quiet meditation and communion with a few choice spirits before he came forth to the world, to declare his faith in Christ by public baptism. His companions were his mother Monica, "a flower of womanhood for those loving men;" his son Adeodatus, with the light on his brow wherewith death stamps his young fair chosen ones; his friend Licentius, the poet, and some few others, forming a little company of ten. It is their meditations under the trees of Cassiacum, near Milan, that we are given in this poem of learning and of power. Though it gives title to the volume, and is interspersed with many musical lines, we cannot think it as

* "St. Augustine's Holiday," by the Bishop of Derry.

beautiful as the one which follows—"An Old Volume of Sermons," where the story of St. Bernard, of never-failing charm, is told with much simplicity, delicacy, and grace. The "Volume of Sermons" is one written by the saint himself on "The Song of Solomon." Bernard's view of it, as being the song of Divine love wooing him from all earthly things and human affections, is compared in the poem to that of M. Renan, who considers it a song of luxurious, sensuous, even libertine fancy on mundane passion, a Swinburnian ode of beautiful language and thought not over refined. We may be sure the bishop does not agree with M. Renan. Imperative, earnest, compelling, it is the Voice of God whispering of the certainty, safety, and rest of heaven, of the delusive vanity and blind madness of earth, bidding him mount the higher platform of faith to gaze for ever on the face of the highest. Is it a wonder that the saintly soul of Bernard is wooed by the sweet tones ; nay, that with his marvellous power of fascination, a power which drew all Europe to his feet, he should have drawn in after him his six war-loving brothers, even his stout old warrior father ? There are single lines, single verses in the poem of exquisite beauty, gems that flash on us with light from their unequal setting, such as the following :

Nothing from self, all from His perfect name ;
To say the good thing in me is my own,
That were as if the chamber-wall should claim
The golden sunbeams shimmering on the stone ;
That were to drain the ocean with thy lips,
Or turn back Jordan with thy finger-tips.

The story of the delightfully human old soldier, Bernard's father, hesitating between his inclination for the world, its excitements and pleasures, and the sanctified joy of a life of prayer, is beautifully told. Heaven is too sublime, too ethereal altogether for the rough old man used to the noise of camps ; the "Song of Solomon" has not for him the alluring sweetness it has for his saintly son, who finds in it "the ocean of the love Divine for the whole Church."

And this love-strain is never over-bold,
When God Himself is our musician, say,

Wilt thou correct Him to a strain less bold,
And teach the mighty Master how to play ?
Two, two alone can hear these tender things—
The soul that listens and the soul that sings.

And on the listening ear are sure to fall some strains of the Eternal Song, alone understood by him to whom they come.

But we must stay our hand ; it were easy to multiply quotations from the beautiful poem which has given us so much pleasure, although we cannot refrain from pointing the reader to Bernard's questioning soliloquy over his dead.

Perhaps they say, " I pardon thee that wrong,
Nay, love thee more divinely for it all ;
Perhaps they strengthen thee when thou art strong,
Perhaps they walk with thee when shadows fall.
But this is all I have for thee ; the fair
Absolute certitude is elsewhere.

Among the shorter poems, to our thinking, some of the most beautiful are " The Chamber Peace," sweet with the fragrance of jessamine and the scent of summer roses ; and the tender, musical little poem, " Christ on the Shore " ; —though is not the idea in the former poem, of the soul " hanging in one great silver roll " over the Cross, perilously near a step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and are we not tempted to think that " roll " crept in because it rhymes with " soul " ? Curiosity compels us to ask what the author means by running water " huddling its hoarse waves," and whether there is any disease prevalent in the Alps which gives the inhabitants " cold white scalps " ? But though there may be a few expressions that are peculiar and even comic in this book of Bishop Alexander's, there are few cultivated minds that will be able to resist its living poetry, and not forced to admire the splendid literary ability and refinement of thought and feeling of its author.

It is to quite another style of book to which we turn, or rather descend, when we take up " The Love Affair," by W. Aldred. The " love affair " that is here dragged

through the usual five acts may be wicked—and it undoubtedly is—but it is not very amusing. We do not mean that there is necessarily any harm in the book as a book, but that the story it relates, of perjured faith and dishonoured love, is neither pleasant in details nor characters; and if it neither pleases nor teaches, it is hard to see reason sufficient for its existence at all.

“A Modern Apostle,” by Constance Naden, is thoughtful, but we cannot think it gains by its poetical form—prose would have suited it equally well. It discusses some modern questions with truth, but not much novelty. The verse limps, and does not strike us as being of a very high order.

Can poetry be made the vehicle of conveying scientific truth? We think not. Directly it ceases to be the natural expression of emotion and imaginative thought, and is converted into a means for instruction, it is no longer poetry. “Sonnets on Nature and Science,” by S. Jefferson, F.R.A.S., must be studied by the reader with a dictionary and a primer of scientific knowledge. We would recommend it to the School Board for teaching the young idea in an interesting form, the latest theories of the nebular hypothesis, and the movements of the “ameeba.”

There are many in the religious world who will welcome with interest this new edition of the Rev. Newman Hall’s hymns—“Songs of Earth and Heaven.”

RUTH BRINDLEY.

CHURCH DICTIONARIES.*

THIS is an extremely useful book of reference; in fact a cyclopaedia of information on religious and ecclesiastical topics lying outside the immediate region of biblical criticism. Messrs. Cassell have a Bible Dictionary which deals

* *The Dictionary of Religion.* Edited by Rev. W. BENHAM, B.D., F.S.A. (Cassell and Co.) *A Dictionary of the Church of England.* By Rev. E. L. CUTTS, B.A. (S.P.C.K.)

with critical and exegetical subjects. This, on the contrary, is entirely a dictionary of churches—their doctrines, rites, ceremonies, and leading representatives—and the amount of information not generally accessible which has been collected together in these pages is very considerable. The compilation of such a work was no easy task. It required not only large knowledge, painstaking research, and strict accuracy, but what was perhaps even more difficult to secure—a freedom from prejudices and prepossessions which would render an honest opinion impossible. So far as we have been able to test the work—for even a reviewer can hardly be expected to read through an encyclopædia—Rev. W. Benham has fairly met these requirements, and, if we are to judge by other works of Rev. J. H. Blunt, to whom the task was originally committed, there has been a gain in fairness by the substitution of the present editor. Mr. Benham is an Anglican clergyman, and of course looks upon subjects to some extent from the clerical standpoint, but he is also capable of appreciating the value of other denominations. We turn naturally, of course, to the account given of ourselves, and opening at “Congregationalists,” we find a brief statement referring us for a fuller account to the word “Independents,” but giving in brief a fair statement of our position and principles, and exhibiting a true appreciation of the special character of the Congregational Union and its relation to the separate churches, such as we do not often find among outsiders. Passing to the longer article on Independents, we gladly recognize the care with which the article is done, and the general justice of its statements and representations. Take, *e.g.*, the following: “Independents are the largest religious body in the United States, and next to the Methodists are the largest body of Dissenters in England. Strictly speaking, Baptists should be included in their numbers, as the latter hold precisely similar views regarding Church order and government, and are therefore simply a section of Independents or Congregationalists who reject infant baptism.” This is a point which has not hitherto received the attention which it deserved even

from Congregationalists themselves, and consequently Independence has not been credited with its actual strength in relation to other Church systems. Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism are the three great forms of Church government. The division between Baptists and Pædo-Baptists has nothing to do with the Church polity, and is really only a subdivision in the one great ecclesiastical family.

On the other hand we do not understand on what authority the writer says that "of late years what is known as the Broad Church school of thought has made greater progress among them than in any other Dissenting body, and the same may be said of actual heterodoxy of various shades, not a few former Independent Churches being now Unitarian." Where these churches are we know not. *A priori* it may appear, as the writer points out, that Congregationalism was more exposed to the inroads of heterodoxy than more highly organized systems, but experience does not justify a forecast in favour of which so much might be said. The general treatment of the history of Independents and of their contention for religious freedom is extremely fair.

The brief account of the history of Presbyterianism in England since the Revolution is strictly accurate. "In England, where it had not gained the affection of the people, most of the congregations, in reaction from Calvinism, became Unitarian. Nevertheless, Presbyterianism upon the old Puritan lines has been revived in the present century in England. In 1836 two Presbyteries were opened, in union with the Church of Scotland. Two more were added in 1839. On the Scottish Disruption in 1843, the English Presbyteries severed this connection, and joined the English congregations of the United Church. In 1876 they were all united under the title of the Presbyterian Church of England." We are not quite clear as to the accuracy of the title United Church. But, apart from this, we have here a brief but impartial outline of the recent history of Presbyterianism in England. It is not a survival from the seventeenth century, but a new development in the nineteenth.

Turning from Dissenters to the parties in the Church itself, we find the same leading characteristics—the evident desire to do justice to the good in all parties, and, combined with this impartiality, a just appreciation of the distinctive traits in the different schools of thought and their relation to each other. The article on Ritualism, *e.g.*, is one of the clearest surveys of the movement and its salient features with which we have met. The writer indeed fails, as it seems to us, to realize the full peril of this Ritualist movement, and leans too much to the opinion of Dean Stanley, whom he largely quotes, but who, despite his many excellences, or possibly because of them, failed to get at the root of theological and ecclesiastical controversies. Mr. Benham apparently takes the standpoint of the Broad Evangelicals, and the passionless character of his representations is admirably suited to a work of this kind.

But the distinctive value of a book like this lies in a somewhat different direction. On great subjects, such as the history of leading denominations, the principles of ecclesiastical systems, or the characteristic features of great movements of religious thought systems, there are abundant sources of information to which we can have recourse. It is on the thousand and one points, many of them comparatively trivial in themselves, yet not without their own importance, which are continually presenting themselves in the course of reading or conversation, that a student finds it difficult to get all at once the information he requires. It is here that an encyclopædia is invaluable, provided it be possible to secure completeness and accuracy. This dictionary has these qualities in a high degree. We are greatly surprised at the wide field of subject which it covers. It is biographical, historical, doctrinal, ecclesiastical, liturgical, and in all these departments it is remarkably complete. We have turned to the articles on various points, and have never found ourselves disappointed. We are far from saying that it would be impossible for a microscopic criticism to detect any errors, but our general impression is one of surprise at the extreme accuracy which has been secured. It will be a most valuable, if not

an indispensable addition to any minister's or student's library. No one who has once learned the worth of such a handbook would willingly be without it.

Of a very different character is the new Dictionary of the Church of England, just issued by the S.P.C.K. It is done by a thoroughly competent hand, but it is distinctly "catholic," as its friends would say—strongly High Church and narrowly sectarian, as others would be more likely to describe it. We do not complain of this. The Society is a literary propaganda, and its work is done with an ability which makes it all the more menacing to those against whom its efforts are directed. The dominant party in the Church, and we suppose in the Committee, are possessed by the idea that one great cause of Dissent is imperfect knowledge of Church history and principles, and the Society, amongst other agencies, is endeavouring to supply the deficiency. This is perfectly natural and legitimate, and it is quite as much so that Nonconformists on the other side should exercise a proper vigilance in examining the statements put forth on behalf of the Established Church, and in opposition to themselves. After all, it is more satisfactory to deal with men who write under a sense of responsibility, and with some knowledge of their subject, than with anonymous authors—including in the term those whose names are unknown when given, as well as those who do not give a name at all—such as those who figure in the correspondence columns of newspapers, or supply literature for Church Defence meetings.

The spirit of the Dictionary may be judged from the view it expresses of Laud, in relation to whom we are told that "he was firm but not harsh in his administration." We hope this does not mean that Mr. Cutts would like to see similar firmness displayed by archbishops now; indeed, we can hardly believe that he himself can regard with satisfaction the extraordinary proofs of firmness which Laud gave in his treatment of the Puritans. Harshness is indeed an extremely mild word to apply to a *régime* whose odious cruelty is only paralleled by its incredible meanness, duplicity, and folly. "It is not pretended," says the Dictionary, "that he was

a perfect man, or that the government in which he took part was always right, or always wise." What a marvellous concession! The policy which set all England ablaze, which overthrew both the monarchy and hierarchy, and which brought king and archbishop to the scaffold, was "not always wise or right," and the proud priest who did so much to inspire it was "not a perfect man!" Even that slight admission, however, is immediately qualified: "Much of the popular blame which is thrown upon it (the administration) arises from this fact, that it was not *successful*." Are we to understand that the writer regrets that it was not successful? Possibly he might say that what was suitable to the seventeenth would be out of place in the nineteenth century, and, though he believes that Laud has suffered the penalty which invariably attends failure, yet he might not be prepared to deny that his success would not ultimately have proved even more disastrous to the Church. But even this ground is cut away from under him by the following somewhat extraordinary utterance: "The same danger to State and Church again threatens us, and, needing again men who are prepared to uphold the ancient Constitution of England at the risk of life, we can the better honour men who, like Laud, are content to lose their lives for the right." The right, indeed! It is time that this specious pretence, which is nothing short of imposture, was exposed. Laud suffered, not because he was a bishop, but because he had sought to establish and, as far as he had opportunity, had carried out, a system of tyranny fatal to all liberty of conscience. We agree with Macaulay in condemning his execution: "Contemptuous mercy was the only vengeance it became the Parliament to take on such a ridiculous old bigot." But he was not a martyr in the cause of the Church of England. He was a martyr only in the cause of that despotism which he laboured so hard to establish. He suffered not as an Episcopalian, but as a traitor to the Constitution. We say this, not in extenuation of the act of those who, carried away by the passion of the hour, executed an enemy who had ceased to be dangerous, and ought, even on grounds of policy, to have been spared. Macaulay has well said, "The fondness with

which a portion of the Church regards his memory can be compared only to that perversity of affection which sometimes leads a mother to select the monster or the idiot of the family as the object of her especial favour." That fondness has been developed to an extraordinary extent since Macaulay wrote thus, and it is of evil omen for the Church itself. The predominance of Laud's spirit could only have one result.

Let us turn to some of the articles on Dissent. We did not expect that we should like them, but we hoped to find some of that endeavour to be fair and that liberality of tone which certainly would have characterized an account of the Church by any Dissenter who had a reputation for which he cared. We are schismatics in the eyes of the writer, and schismatics are likely to have but little mercy from an admirer of Laud. Still, self-respect, if not common sense, ought to have saved him from some of the faults and follies into which he has been betrayed. Thus he tells us, "Nothing is more remarkable in the recent religious history of the people than the way in which Dissent, while not increasing as a whole, is nevertheless rapidly dividing into a multitude of little sects." In proof of this we have a table taken from the Registrar-General's return intended to prove that while in 1871 there were 177 names of different denominations, in 1886 it had increased to 213. We have been accustomed to regard this argument as too childish to be noticed. There always have been, always will be, eccentric people who prefer to separate themselves from fellowship with others, but to talk of the little communities in which they group themselves as new sects is miserable trifling with a serious subject. But when we come to examine the list we find that it includes, not only such sects (if they can be called so) as "Christian Eliasites," or "Recreative Religionists," or "Christians owning no name but Jesus," or "Christians who object to be otherwise designated," but a multitude of associations which are manifestly of a philanthropic or missionary character, and have no idea of setting up as sects. Is the "Church Army" a sect? Yet it is one of the 213, and with it are

the "Children's Special Service Association," the "Christian Army," the "Blue Ribbon Gospel Army," the "Free Salvation Army," the "Hallelujah Band," the "Hackney Juvenile Mission," the "Methodist Army," the "Mission Army," the "Rescue and Evangelization Mission," and a long list of others of a like character. It would be an insult to the intelligence of the Editor if we were to suggest that he regards these as new sects. They have their Sunday meetings, and they return the halls in which they are held as belonging to them, but they have as little idea of founding new sects as Mr. Cutts himself. Reasoning of this type, based on representations so utterly misleading, is a discredit to any one by whom it is employed. It is a shameless attempt to stir up unworthy prejudice. It will profit so little that we venture to suggest that honourable controversialists will do well to eschew it. When we read that "the melancholy truth illustrated by the foregoing facts and figures is the division and consequent enfeeblement of English Christianity by Dissent," we might be angry were it not so supremely ridiculous. The truth is, most of these associations are illustrations of that revived spirit of activity which is characteristic of the times. They may be very erratic, but they are nothing worse than ill-regulated manifestations of religious earnestness. Many of them are composed of members of the Established Church who do not like to take up the cross of Dissent, and yet fret against the restraints of their own Church, and make a compromise by throwing themselves into these "unsectarian" movements in which they are often the most lawless and extreme of their members.

We cannot attempt even to glance at all the misrepresentations of Dissent given in the articles on the subject. If we think it expedient we may deal with them again. But there is one point to which we must refer. Take this as an admirable illustration of the singularly Catholic spirit which is manifested by those who claim to be Catholics *par excellence*. "It is well to bear in mind that Dissent has had other and deeper causes than ignorance of sound theology and Church history, and self-willed im-

patience of authority; it has often been the practical protest of religious earnestness against coldness and deadness in the Church against abuses, against the obscuration of important truths." Comment on this is hardly necessary. We have only to read between the lines to understand the marvellous self-complacency with which the writer deals out his censures impartially to Dissenters and to those in the Church who are not of his own party. Paraphrased it tells us that Dissenters are for the most part uncultured and violent men, but there are some who are really devout but have been driven out of the Church because it has not always exhibited the spirit, or taught the doctrines of the Catholic school. We suppose it is impossible for such men to believe that they are not infallible, but, at least, they might try to recognize that there are others not wholly destitute of intelligence, though they may not have risen to their own exalted level, who have conscientiously arrived at different conclusions, and who, in acting up to them, are honestly endeavouring to do the will of Christ.

THE THEOLOGY OF MISSION EPOCHS.

An extremely thoughtful and suggestive article on this subject appears in the January number of *The Andover Review* which we should have been glad to give in full. We must content ourselves with copious extracts which will enable our readers to understand the drift and purport of an extremely useful paper. There have been (says the writer) two great mission epochs—the apostolic, and the post-apostolic. "It goes without saying that apostolic preaching and the apostolic theology which underlay their preaching, were of the outreaching, inclusive type." Mr. Jackson then proceeds:—

Why, then, we ask, did such preaching cease, and such theology give way to a different type, before all had been included under the Christian sway? Why did the faith

pause in Western Asia and Europe, and then even shrink back from regions which it had conquered, instead of bursting the barriers of deserts and mountains, and winning all Asia and Africa and the islands of the Orient? Because, we reply, it is God's method to work through human agencies; and now, as in the earlier period of the redemptive work, this human element proved sadly limited. True, there had been funded in that people of Israel resources of spiritual power which availed the Church for three centuries, long after the Jewish nation had ceased, as such, to exist. But all human resources, however large, come to an end. The first missionaries, sustained by a church that felt behind it the God of Jacob, and felt itself the inheritor of all the wealth stored up on Mount Zion, went forth with undaunted zeal, their one thought that Christ died for all, and that by His grace all men, Jew and Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, should hear of His gospel and live. But generations passed. The funded resources of the chosen nation and the holy Church ran lower and lower, until at last, like the waters of an intermittent spring, they ceased to overflow to those without Jordan ceased to overflow all its banks, and it ceased to be a time of harvest. This was not because God's grace was limited. Had men still been found to carry the gospel with apostolic zeal, it would have proved as availng at the sources of the Nile and the Niger as at the sources of the Jordan, by the far-off China Sea as by the Sea of Galilee. What was limited, depleted beyond ability to do aggressive work outside its own confines, was the spiritual power of the Church, made up of men whose spiritual capacities were finite. It need not be claimed that this power was absolutely curtailed,—probably it was not; but relatively to the field which it occupied, it had declined beyond the point of aggressive work. Not a little of the power which might have been given to evangelizing the nations was diverted to the theological contests of the fourth and fifth centuries. Indeed, the cessation of the rapid spread of the faith was nearly contemporaneous with the exact formulating of the orthodox doctrines in precise creeds; a

work which needed to be done, truly, but which was the mark of a spiritual decline, of a church getting ready for an age of pause and recuperation, rather than of a church of apostolic vigour. But the creed-making diversion was not the cause, it was only a symptom of the decline in aggressive power. The real cause was the power of the ever-increasing worldliness, against which the Church had contended valiantly, but before which it had now to pause for breath. God's grace was in no wise depleted ; the Spirit was yet ready to go forth with men and bless their labours ; but the element of human spiritual energy, which God's method of advancing His kingdom always involves, had now, so to speak, been spread so thin over those heathen millions that there was nowhere depth and vigour enough to advance. The stream that flowed from Mount Zion was like the rivers which flow from Mount Lebanon into the plain of Damascus. They leap down the mountain sides in headlong torrents, and push their way for a time with vigour, not only making their banks luxuriant, but rushing ever forward to new fields. But the expanse is ever wider, and the desert soil drier, and the streams become rivulets, and the rivulets disappear in the sands. The rivers have not ceased to flow, but all their waters are absorbed in the nearer plain. They cannot reach the regions beyond, until the returning sun again shines on snow-capped Lebanon, and mightier torrents rush down its slopes. So the stream that was making glad the city of God in the early Christian centuries found its natural limit, and for many following centuries watered only Southern and Western Europe. How long would it be before the Sun of Righteousness should again appear with power in His Church, filling to overflowing its springs of spiritual life, and bringing a new era of apostolic zeal for the conversion of the world ? No one could foretell. The world had once waited two thousand years while the Jewish Church had done only internal work. Might it not have to wait as long for the Christian Church ?

And, meantime, what was to be the training of this Church ? Singularly enough, it was not a little like that

of the old chosen people. From first to last, from the cessation of the territorial conquests of Christianity until the new apostolic era dawned with this century, everything tended to shut the Church up within itself and narrow its sympathies, like those of the Jews, to its own lands, if not to its own fold. There were, of course, local and exceptional centres of aggressive life: for example, the Irish Church of the sixth century, sending its missionaries to Scotland and to Central Europe; Rome, under Gregory, sending Augustine and his monks to pagan England; the English Church of the eighth century sending Boniface into Germany; and the monasteries of the ninth century sending Anschar and his successors to the conversion of Scandinavia. Still it was true that the great work of the Church for above a thousand years was internal, its thoughts and prayers seldom recognizing the great world without, save as it drew swords now and then with the Saracens, as the old Jews had fought with Philistines and Assyrians. Its life was thus turned in upon itself by a succession of providences as marked as any in the history of Israel. The decline in civilization, and so in commercial intercourse with the outside world, which followed the inroads of the Northern nations, played its part. In the East, the subordination of the Church to the half pagan state led to the hardening of Christianity into a mere intellectual and tritheistic orthodoxy, which paralyzed all aggressive effort, and opened the field to the at least monotheistic Mohammedans.

But in the West, where spiritual life still abounded, the chief restrictive elements were the Latin theology and Roman ecclesiasticism. The foundation of this theology, laid not in Rome but in the province of North Africa, lacked the breadth given to theology by contemporary Greeks, Tertullian, the first Latin writer, suggesting to us rather an old Hebrew prophet than a Christian apostle. And this Judaistic beginning was prophetic. For the hand that had given Moses to Israel soon gave to the Latin Church its Augustine. Augustine! a man of the ages, but still a North African, and a worthy successor of Tertullian. He

formulated the doctrines of salvation of the Latin Church, not upon the broad conceptions of Christ as a universal Saviour, which obtained in the earlier Church, but upon those rigid and narrowing conceptions of election and irresistible grace, and reprobation and utter helplessness, which we now sum up under the name of Calvinism,—a theology from which the Western Church has never fairly escaped until within the memory of man. Whatever of gratitude the Church may owe to Augustine and Calvin—and it does owe much—the debt is not for what they did to enlarge its sympathies and extend its work among the heathen, but for what they did to intensify and elevate its interior life. For, so long as those two minds dominated, to the exclusion of truths which they had forgotten, the apostolic era was compelled to wait.

Then, secondly, under the double influence of the monastic institution and of the power of the papacy, arose that peculiarly restrictive doctrine of the Church, in accordance with which it was virtually limited to those in orders. A popular picture of the Church of the Middle Ages represents a ship in full sail for the heavenly port, on board of which no one is to be seen but the clergy, though one good-natured monk has hold of a rope by which he is dragging along a poor struggling wretch, presumably a layman, in the water. Such ecclesiastical ideas were hardly more adapted than the Augustinian theology to promote foreign missions and the conversion of the world. We have no reflection to make upon either of these, but we recognize clearly what was and what was not their mission. It was not, any more than was that of the Mosaic system, to carry the gospel to the whole creation; it was to affect in some way the interior life of the Church. Beyond question both the theology and the ecclesiasticism gave to churchmen a certain assurance of the Divine guidance, and a certain strength to resist the encroachments of mediæval worldliness, which they would not otherwise have had, and so helped to bring the Church through to better days. For better days came. They began with the overthrow of the papal supremacy, and the

lessening of clerical corruption, through the Protestant Reformation. Thanks to this, and to other salutary influences preceding and following, the Roman Church was for a little time shaken out of its selfish apathy, and sent its missionaries, like Las Casas and Xavier, to the farthest East and the most distant West. But the new apostolic era was not to be inaugurated by the Church of Rome, nor was it to begin at that Reformation period. For the early Protestant Church was even less than the Roman a missionary church. That branch of it through which, mainly, the apostolic work was to revive—the churches of England and America—had singularly enough to undergo another special training, under those narrowing but spiritually intensifying doctrines of Calvinism. And what there was in Judaism to develop a Judas Maccabæus and exalt a whole people into a reservoir of spiritual power, that there seems to have been in Calvinism to develop a John Knox, a John Robinson, an Oliver Cromwell, and a Jonathan Edwards, and to store up at length in Old England and New England a spiritual fund, which needed only the broadening of the thought of its possessors, and the touch of the Holy Ghost upon their souls, to inaugurate the long-delayed era of salvation and send forth missionaries to the conquest of the world. The broadening of the thought and the baptism of the Holy Spirit—just what was needed to inaugurate the apostolic mission era. And that these were needed now is proved by an incident of the occurrence of which this is the centennial year. Others like it could be cited among the Calvinists of Scotland and New England, but this one is typical. By the last years of the eighteenth century, serious inroads had been made upon the theology of the fathers of the Reformation, but if there was an intact English Calvinist living it was the venerable Dr. Ryland, the Baptist preacher of Northampton. When, at a meeting of ministers of which he was chairman, William Carey presumed to propose a discussion on the question, "Whether the command given to the apostles to teach all nations, was not obligatory on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world?" Ryland shouted out, "You are a miserable

enthusiast for asking such a question. Certainly nothing can be done before another Pentecost, when an effusion of miraculous gifts, including the gift of tongues, will give effect to the commission of Christ as at first." But happily the Pentecostal Spirit was working in ways which Dr. Ryland had not yet recognized. Just as, when the long winter of inaction was closing in upon the Church, provision had been made by rigidly formulating the doctrines, by narrowing Christian sympathies to the elect, and by organizing and sharply defining the work and the prerogatives of the Church; so now, when the spring was coming, the movements of those days were being reversed. Instead of Augustine had risen John Wesley. Instead of predestination of the few to be saved and the multitudes to be lost, there had been ringing through England for forty years and upon the shores of America for twenty years the doctrines of free grace and atonement for all. As a result, the narrow conceptions of Dr. Ryland as to God's purposes of mercy had been so far replaced by broader views that when he rebuked Carey he found, so far as theory went, few sympathizers. Whatever men's creeds, practically men did not believe, with the Westminster Confession, that in predestinating some men and angels unto everlasting life, and foreordaining some to everlasting death, God had "particularly and unchangeably" designated them, so that "their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished." If they had so believed, little good might the gift of the Spirit have been to them so far as missions were concerned. Men do not take their lives in their hands, even in the service of God, without some hope of results. They had, in this instance, to be delivered from a paralyzing fatalism. This deliverance from the old hyper-Calvinistic views had come, in England, without great intellectual struggles. Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge had somewhat smoothed their asperities at an earlier day. Then, undermined as they had been by the latitudinarian views of the Church of England, when evangelical Arminianism thus asserted itself, under the Wesleys, they fell, almost by their own weight. And then

that Spirit which had been bestowed upon a handful of brethren at Hernhutt, and upon those few young men who knelt with Wesley at Oxford, became as tongues of fire descending here and there upon devout souls—mostly Calvinists, in whom God by His chosen method had been working His own deep work—and showing them that, like St. Paul, they were not simply to labour at home, but to go far off among the Gentiles.

This in Old England. In New England Calvinism was of sterner stuff, and the opening of the gates of righteousness involved the battling of giants. The strings of the instrument that sounds the clearest notes are given an extra tension. So, as if to America was to be committed the place of honour in the impending work, to her was vouchsafed a third spiritual intensifying through Calvinistic teachings. Augustine, Calvin, Jonathan Edwards: our Moses, Ezra, and John the Baptist. That eighteenth century baptism of the Holy Ghost, which in Old England chiefly affected the heart, in New England touched head and heart. There were revivals here. The Great Awakening brought many into the churches; but the permanent results were not class-meetings and love-feasts, but theological treatises. Jonathan Edwards was no less a pre-destinarian than Calvin or Augustine, and he gave to their doctrines a new lease of life in New England; nevertheless he initiated the downfall of what he persuaded himself to be a system of truth. When, in the earliest history of the Latin Church, God was preparing for the long Judaistic era, old Tertullian said of certain cherished views that he believed them because they were impossible. At the close of that era Edwards may have believed as difficult doctrines as Tertullian; but he made herculean efforts to prove that they were possible. That he failed of justifying Old Calvinism to a generation of men whose hearts God had touched, and whose intellects He had quickened, is shown by the theological writings of that remarkable body of men who followed him, and who developed what we know as New England theology, as distinct from the Calvinism of the Middle and Southern

States, of Scotch and Dutch origin. To these men theology was not a completed and perfected system, to be found ready made in Calvin's Institutes, but, in Dr. Bacon's words, "their own free and earnest thinking on the themes of God's revelation to mankind." Such thinking soon forbade their believing in a limited atonement, and compelled them to co-ordinate ability and responsibility. But whatever they did not believe, they did believe in the Divine sovereignty; and upon this corner-stone Hopkins and Bellamy and Edwards (the younger) and Smalley and Emmons and Woods reared a new structure, Calvinistic still, intensely so, but yet breaking from the old bounds, and at least proclaiming that Christ died for all. Side by side with this broadening influence had been another which affected the educated classes. College education, which at first in this country had been hardly more than a preliminary course in divinity, began reaching out in classical studies. A partly-forgotten world was thus brought back within range of thought; and who shall say what questionings it awakened? Then, too, the commercial relations of our little corner of the world vied with those of Old England in reaching the ends of the earth, so preparing another class of minds for larger sympathies. And then it was—when, to complete our comparison, Judea and Greece and Rome had each prepared the way—that the pentecostal tongues fell upon Mills, and Judson, and Hall, and Newell, and Ann Hasseltine, and Harriet Atwood.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors!

was at last the cry, and the King of Glory went forth to the possession of the world.

And, while remembering that there had been an Eliot and a Brainerd in earlier days, we must recognize that this apostolic dawn came, as it had come in England, only after the repudiation of the old high Calvinism. But between theology and missions there was to be action and reaction. If the breaking down of the older Calvinism by the New England theology contributed to the opening of

the door of grace to the heathen world, the opening of that door contributed in turn to a further modification of our theology: just as the apostolic theology had been modified by the reports brought back from their mission journey by Paul and Barnabas. Among a people praying for the conversion of the world, old Hopkinsianism was compelled to bow to a milder and more outreaching faith. As the old New England theology had been unorthodox outside of New England, the representatives of New Haven and Andover became unorthodox in the eyes of the old New England divines. As Barnes and Beecher had been heretics to the Old School, Professor Taylor was now a heretic to the men of East Windsor, and Professor Park was a heretic to his neighbours of the preceding generation. But were these men therefore forsaking the truth? No, they were but catching the spirit of those workers far off among the Gentiles, publishing salvation to all men.

And as that spirit was wafted back to the shores of New England, so it was carried to Old England. We may, with Principal Tulloch, trace the religious thought of the century back to Coleridge, and may mark all the windings of its development in all the schools; but we shall find that the spirit of missions, the out-reaching spirit of the "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people," has done more to give character to English theology than the arguments of the greatest thinkers.

If on both continents there have come occasional checks; if East Windsor for a time drew back; if ultra ecclesiasts are to-day saying that there is no salvation outside of their own little folds; and if a few pulpit orators, drawing inspiration from the fatalistic teachings of modern science, rather than from the free spirit of modern missions, are contenting themselves with what mission-Christianity has shaken off: so in the early days Peter drew back for a time at Antioch; James continued to observe the temple ritual, and the little church in Galatia concluded that none could be saved except they were circumcised; while a fraction of the Church, the Ebonites, actually went back

into Judaism or became extinct. Nevertheless, apostolic work went on, and Paul, not Peter nor James, was the theologian of the first great mission epoch.

And as of the first so also of the second. The Christian thought of to-day does not draw its inspiration from Augustine, nor from Calvin, nor from Edwards, but from Christ and from Paul. If it receives an impetus from early writings outside the inspired pages, it is from the works of the free, outreaching Greek, rather than from those of the narrower Latin fathers. With Paul it counts not itself to have apprehended ; but it presses on. It welcomes light upon God's Word from any and from every source. It has learned something within the past twenty-five and even within the past ten years.

DENOMINATIONAL NOTES.

DR. DALE and Mr. Albert Spicer, who left our shores for a visit to the Australian churches by the *Arawa*, go at the request of our Colonial brethren, not by deputation from the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Not the less are they the representatives of that Union, distinctly commissioned to convey to the churches of that important section of "Greater Britain" something more than fraternal greetings ; assurances of entire sympathy in their work and of desire to knit more closely the bonds of friendship between us. Two men better fitted to render this service could not have been found. Mr. Albert Spicer holds a high position among the representative laymen of Congregationalism, not solely in virtue of the name he bears—although heredity must count for something even amongst us ; not even because, true to the traditions of his family, he supports all our institutions with generous liberality ; but chiefly because of that intelligent and earnest zeal which he has thrown into the activities of the churches everywhere. He will be greatly missed during his period of absence at the council boards

both of our Home and Foreign missionary societies, but the loss will not be without compensation if he brings back some of the freshness and vigour of the young life of the Colonies. The London Missionary Society felt the impetus of the enlarged views and intensified zeal which were the result of his personal contact with the work and the workers in India and China. Of all our societies it is that which would profit most by the infusion of more of the Colonial class and courage. It may be that the new spirit which Mr. Spicer will be able to infuse may thus in some measure compensate for the loss sustained through his temporary withdrawal from the work of our committees.

Of the welcome which our kindred beyond the sea will accord both to Dr. Dale as well as to his fellow-traveller, there can be no doubt. No man stands out more prominently in the Congregational life of to-day, or is held in more deserved honour by the churches at home. It is not to be supposed that he is in perfect accord with those churches, whether in theological, ecclesiastical, or political opinions. As we have never failed to insist, there must be room for great diversities in Congregationalism, and it is the glory of our system that in spite of them the churches maintain true unity of spirit, and honour men for their personal worth irrespective of, nay, rather because of, their marked individuality. Dr. Dale has certainly not earned his distinguished position by any concessions to popular prejudice. There is not a more independent thinker in our ministry, and among those who love him best are some who differ most widely from him on questions of supreme importance. It would not be easy for us to employ language in excess of the affection and admiration with which we regard him. It has been one of the chief joys of our life to be for years closely associated with him, to profit by his inspiring influence, and to share the excitement and toil of common work in which we were alike interested. But he and I never professed to have perfect unity of opinion; we were content to know that there has ever been perfect unity of heart, and that has never been interrupted by an approach to a misunderstanding. More than once have we enjoyed our quiet laugh

over the suggestions that some difference of judgment on some question of the hour had interfered with the absolute trust of our friendship. As it has been with ourselves, so is it with others. Dr. Dale commands the love and admiration of numbers who dissent from some parts of his theological teaching, and have deeply regretted of late to see his influence cast on the side of a political party which, in their judgment, was acting in opposition to the interests of true progress. Is not this what ought to be? Is not the idea that there can be no true affinity where there is not intellectual agreement as mischievous as it is fallacious? Unfortunately no party has wholly shaken it off. There are even champions of advanced thought who seem unable to extend to others the liberty they claim for themselves. A man must be free to reject as many dogmas as he sees right, and he is to be commended for his wisdom and courage, but for one who holds fast by the faith of his early days there is only scorn. True Christian charity respects conscience everywhere, and teaches us to give honour to whom honour, love to whom love, reverence to whom reverence is due, whatever the diversities of creed which may separate us.

To Dr. Dale honour, love, and reverence are all due for his own sake, and for the sake of the work he has done for Congregationalism. It is not often that the opportunity occurs for recording these sentiments, and we gladly, therefore, avail ourselves of the present time for expressing our sense of those high qualities which he has used with such unstinting devotion for the advancement of that great work to which his life has been consecrated. The deep impression which he has made upon the great population of Birmingham as well as upon a wide circle, extending far beyond the limits of his own denomination, is due as much or even more to his moral grandeur than to his intellectual power. Those who know him best, feel most that he is utterly incapable of a mean or ungenerous or merely selfish action, and even when they differ from him are ready to recognize the purity and nobility of the motives which have led him to conclusions they could not

themselves adopt. Perhaps no man has done more to enlarge the conception of the true work of the Christian minister. Hostile critics might have suggested that he had secularized it, were it not for the high order of spirituality by which he is himself distinguished. His aim has been to bring all life under the dominion of Christ, and in doing this he has sought to efface that distinction between things sacred and secular which has put a large portion of life outside the dominion of the Lord. To him all things are sacred and life an organic whole whose every hour and work must be pervaded by love to Christ. The minister of the gospel is necessarily to be pre-eminently an example of this. His many-sided humanity is to be as conspicuous as his devoutness of spirit and of life. He is to be a worker in the world's vineyard, ready for any and every kind of service which promises to aid in the purification of society or the elevation of the individual man, and he is to do all in the name, for the sake, and in harmony with the love of the Lord Jesus. Dr. Dale's ideal is the very opposite of that which clericalism has set up, and by which it has done so much injury to vital religion. The distinctive feature of his anti-clericalism, however, has been its association with a burning zeal for Evangelical truth and a singular beauty of personal character. He has a wonderful depth of religious feeling as well as a rare tenderness of heart, which have made him eminently successful as a preacher and pastor; and the political activity of a man of his type has been a puzzle to superficial observers. But it need be no puzzle at all. It is only a consistent development of Christian principle for which he would not attempt or accept an apology. He does not stand alone, but is an eminent type of a class of Christian teachers whom the influences of the century have done something to create, and whom its necessities imperatively demand. We have clerics enough. We need more men saturated with the spirit of the gospel and full of passionate loyalty for its truth, but in full touch with the age to which they belong; able to speak to the children in the market-place and make

them feel that they understand them and their wants; commanding respect by the breadth and nobility of their manhood, and yet proving themselves in all respects faithful servants of Christ. In so far as Dr. Dale has helped to call forth men of this stamp, he has done the churches great service. Very probably such men will always be misunderstood by those who have been trained in the ideas of another school, but they will sweep away misconception and opposition if they are able to show, as our friend has done, that their interest in the common things of life, and even in the controversies of the day, has not lowered the tone of their ministry, and that in ceasing to be clerical they have lost nothing of the warm glow of holy love to God and man. The influence of a leader of men imbued so deeply with the spirit of Christ as Dr. Dale is upon the Australian churches, cannot but be productive of good. We can only pray that the Lord will have our friends in His own loving keeping, will greatly bless their visit and will grant that their return to us in due time may be as the breath of a new and vigorous life for our own churches.

The condition of two of the largest of our Congregational colleges at present is such as it would require a very optimist spirit to contemplate with satisfaction. Both at New College and Lancashire there has been something which to the outside world looks very much like a revolution. At both most of the professors have practically been forced into resignation. In Lancashire the resignation has not actually been given in, but the step has been suggested by the Committee to those of the staff. The professors have not unnaturally asked for reconsideration of a suggestion which has come as a surprise, not on them only, but on a large number of the friends of the College. It is not our intention to pass any judgment in relation to these proceedings of the Committee, on some of which there has already been much too free an expression of opinion. The real facts can be but imperfectly understood by outside critics, and it is wise to reserve any decisive verdict

until the full statements of both parties are before us. There are, however, some general observations on which we, who have taken no part in the proceedings, and whose only desire is to see the increased efficiency of the College, may venture. It is fair to assume that a College Committee, whatever mistakes it may commit, has in view the prosperity of the institution it manages. Its ideas as to what will promote that object may be fallacious, but it should at least have credit for purity of motive. But if this be conceded, then it is surely safe to go a point further and say that as the Committee must be all specially anxious for the success of the College, they must also be best informed as to its actual condition and needs. Until, therefore, some strong reason has been shown to the contrary, we should be disposed to trust in the wisdom of its united counsels rather than to the judgment of individuals. The very burden of responsibility must make a Committee cautious. We say this not only for the sake of College Committees, but of our Committees generally. Far be it from us to suggest that they can do nothing wrong, but we must enter our protest against the assumption that they can do nothing wise or right which is so commonly made by their critics. They are composed of Christian gentlemen who are doing their best to serve the churches, but who cannot serve them at all unless they enjoy their confidence. What they are entitled to ask, especially in relation to questions so grave as those of which we are writing, is that their conduct be judged without prejudice; and, in order to this, that it be not judged at all until there is accurate knowledge as to the motives by which it has been prompted. Though we say this, we confess to a feeling of blank amazement as to the action of the Lancashire College Committee, but we hold our judgment in suspense until we have fuller information.

These occurrences have necessarily directed the attention of the churches to our colleges, and thoughtful men are asking whether they are accomplishing the good we have a right to expect from them. Especially does this question suggest itself when any of their alumni pass over to what

one of the class described as "our more favoured brethren of the Establishment," and use the culture which they owe to Dissenting institutions for attacking Dissent itself. It may be quite true that their secession is no serious loss to us, but it certainly starts very serious reflections as to our college training. These colleges are maintained for the purpose of supplying churches with preachers who shall be faithful to the gospel and to the principles of Congregationalism. It may be a good thing that there should be a body of diligent searchers after truth who have not any definite creed of their own, but who are seeking for one, and who are willing to help those who will accept their guidance in the quest, informing them carefully as to their own uncertainties and doubts, or giving them the little fragments of truth which they pick up here and there, and out of which they hope ultimately to work out a system of their own. These eclectic philosophers may be very amiable and excellent men, and may have great capacity for teaching, but our colleges do not exist for the purpose of producing them, but of training preachers of the gospel. So also it is certain that there will be Christian preachers who believe in bishops, priests, and deacons, and who hold that it is the duty of the State to support a national church; and it may even be desirable (though we venture to doubt it) that there should be Evangelical preachers who are loftily superior to all questions of church polity and denominational distinctions. But again we say Congregational churches do not support colleges in order that they may send forth men of this type. They are denominational institutions, having a very definite object in view, and so far as they fail in that, they fail of their purpose. On the committees a very solemn responsibility rests; we know of none more grave in connection with our denominational work. The churches expect, and have a right to expect, that they should be very jealous of all the highest interests of the denomination, its fidelity to the gospel, its efficiency in bringing that gospel home to the hearts of the people, its adherence to the pure and simple ideal of Free Church life. We find

it sometimes assumed that there is an indifference to orthodoxy, and a general agreement to accept a later style of theological teaching. There is so much truth in this, that there is still a wholesome recollection of the "Rivulet" controversy, which would prevent the renewal of such unwise championship of orthodoxy as that of those days. There is, too, a growing distrust of hard forms, and of the temper which would insist on them to the forgetfulness of the spirit of the gospel. But there is also a passionate love for the great verities of revelation, which seems hardly to be understood by those who are only too much disposed to treat the old orthodoxy with something that approaches very nearly to contempt, and with an intolerance which reproduces the old bigotry which has so often made that orthodoxy offensive. If college committees ignore this sentiment, and proceed on the belief that the churches are enamoured of that Latitudinarianism with which learned divines may trifle, but which to plain Christians means the sacrifice of everything that is vital, they will commit a fatal mistake.

The denominational obituary of last month has a feature of very melancholy interest. On Sunday, July 17th, Rev. G. M. Murphy passed away with a suddenness which was startling to those who had seen him at a great public meeting on the previous night apparently in the enjoyment of his ordinary health and vigour. In him Congregationalism has lost a man whom it can ill spare. His position was in some important respects unique, because of the remarkable influence which he wielded over a large section of working people of London. He was one of themselves, and though by force of ability and weight of personal character he had raised himself to a higher social position, he never ceased to be in full touch and sympathy with them, and enjoyed to the end their unabated confidence and affection. We have watched his course from his first introduction into public life, and were not more impressed by the evidence he gave of his fitness for the responsible position he was called

upon to fill, than by the unaffected modesty and simplicity which he always exhibited. He was a real power in South London, as was shown by his repeated elections to the School Board, on which he did most valuable service. His manliness of character, his straightforwardness of purpose, his strong unswerving fidelity to principle, and his unselfish devotion to the elevation of the people won for him the respect of all, and the enthusiastic attachment of the class to whose interest his life was given. He was a man of boundless energy, and yet even it was overtaxed by the labours which he undertook. The Saturday evenings at Lambeth Baths were an institution, and as they owed their existence to his initiative, so their success through many long years has been due to his untiring perseverance. He was a constant speaker on the Temperance platform, and, in truth, it would not be easy to mention any great movement of social reform or political progress in which he was not a prominent worker. He will indeed be sorely missed. So trustworthy, so indefatigable, so firm in principle, so kindly in spirit, he was conspicuous as an example of what a minister of the gospel ought to be. The working people felt the power of his life, and as they believed in him, learnt also to honour the religion which inspired and controlled him.

The next day died Mr. James Scrutton, one of the quiet workers whose worth is understood only by those who are in close association with them. He was a member of a family which has long been honourably associated with Congregationalism, and he maintained all its best traditions. He did not often appear on public platforms, but as a chairman of committees he was *facile princeps*. Behind a singularly courteous and kindly manner he had a firm and resolute spirit, as was speedily discovered if any difficulty arose. We have observed him for years as the chairman of the committee of the Congregational Union, where his suavity of manner, his clear perception of the points of business, his familiarity with all laws of procedure, and his unfailing courtesy to all, made him universally popular. He will be deeply mourned by a large circle who knew his great worth.

THE STORY OF THE CROSS.

BY LYMAN ABBOTT.

HOWEVER rationalism may interpret the story of the Cross, however even a scoffing scepticism may repeat the taunts which the priests heaped upon the Sufferer, the candid mind must recognize the fact that no event in history has produced so profound an impression upon the great majority of the human race, and that this impression, instead of growing feebler as the event recedes into the past, grows both profounder and wider with the lapse of time. However theologians may differ with one another as to the religious significance of Christ's passion and death, no student of history can question that it is that passion and death which has produced the profound impression of Christ's personality upon mankind ; that He is worshipped, loved, and followed, not chiefly as the Teacher or the Law-giver, but as the Sufferer. Even the sceptic bears an unconscious and unwitting testimony to this truth. Read Renan's apostrophe to the Crucified :

" Repose now in Thy glory, noble founder. Thy work is finished ; Thy divinity is established. Fear no more to see the edifice of Thy labours fall by any fault. Henceforth beyond the reach of frailty, Thou shalt witness from the heights of Divine peace the infinite results of Thy acts. At the price of a few hours of suffering, which did not even reach Thy grand soul, Thou hast bought the most complete immortality. For thousands of years the world will depend on Thee ! Banner of our contests, Thou shalt be the standard about which the hottest battle will be given. A thousand times more alive, a thousand times more beloved, since Thy death than during Thy passage here below, Thou shalt become the corner-stone of humanity so entirely that to tear Thy name from this world would be to rend it to its foundations. Between Thee and God there will no longer be any distinction. Complete conqueror of death, take possession of Thy kingdom, whither shall follow Thee, by the royal road which Thou hast traced, ages of worshippers."

Call this, as with some justice we may, the irrational sentimentalism of a Frenchman whose philosophy and poetry do not accord, and who reverences with words One whom he has portrayed as unworthy of either reverence or following, it is none the less, but rather the more, a significant testimony to the truth that it is the Cross of Christ which has commanded the worship of the world ; that it is Christ lifted up who has drawn all men unto Him ; that it is Calvary, not the Mount of Beatitudes—the Cross, not the Sermon on the Mount—Christ the Sufferer, not Christ the Teacher—that has filled the earth with a Divine radiance ; or, if this antithesis be thought not to be strictly true, as indeed it is not, that at least the Sermon on the Mount derives its eloquence from the death of the preacher, and Christ the Teacher His power over mankind from Christ the Crucified. However we may think, as I certainly do, that theology has made a grievous mistake in substituting a philosophical statement for a living reality, the doctrine of the atonement for the story of the Cross, it has certainly made a wise selection in making, as orthodox theology has done, the doctrine of the atonement central in its system. However we may think, as I certainly do, that ecclesiasticism has made an equally grievous mistake—perhaps hardly more grievous—in substituting the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass for the historical sacrifice of the Saviour, it has certainly made a wise selection in making the Passion the heart of its gorgeous ritual. If the object of the adoration of the ages had been the Teacher, the symbol of Christianity would have been an open book or an unsealed roll ; had it been the King, that symbol would have been the palm branch, recalling His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem ; the symbol of Christianity is the Cross because the object of the Christian's worship is the Sufferer. There is a deep significance in the counsel attributed, I believe, to Talleyrand, whose advice was asked by one of the religionists spawned in the Revolution. "I have," he said, "a far more rational religion to propose to my countryman than Christianity. What course do you advise me to take to secure its in-

troduction?" "I suggest to you," replied Talleyrand, suavely, "that you arrange to have yourself crucified."

And yet there is certainly little or nothing in the story of the Cross uninterpreted to appeal to the reverence or even to the sympathies of mankind. Thousands of innocent men have died a painful and lingering death, and humanity knows not even their name. History knows Jesus of Nazareth as the Crucified; and yet He was but one of hundreds who suffered the same torturing death under Roman rule, many of them victims of injustice scarcely less gross, and wrath scarcely less savage. The story of the Cross was, at first evidently an apparent hindrance, however real a power it may have been in the propagation of Christianity. When Paul writes to the Corinthians, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," and adds, "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling," he indicates that there was nothing in the nature of the simple story of the Cross which it appeared to him was likely to attract the average Corinthian. The history of sacred art at once illustrates and emphasizes this truth, that the attractive power of the Cross is not in the mere outward scene, but in some deep significance veiled behind it. "Unmistakable at a glance," says Mrs. Jameson,* "the crucifixion rears itself up before us, having for centuries enlisted every kind of art, and every class of the artist mind; a monument of the faith which weighed no considerations of art in its prescription of such a scene, and a trophy of the art which relied unquestioning on faith to redeem the unfitness of such a scene for representation—the last thing to which classic art would have devoted its powers, and by no means the first thing which Christian art ventured to bring before the sight; which needed the lapse of centuries of prejudice and timidity before it could be represented at all, but which, setting forth, as it does, the great culminating mystery of our faith—the head corner-stone of the theological temple—'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world'—has since abounded

* "History of our Lord," The Crucifixion.

in an hundredfold proportion to any other form of Scripture representation." What is that something which faith has discovered, and which, when discovered, has redeemed the unfitness of such a scene for representation? What is it that has lifted into the heavens the cross, aforesome a symbol of ignominy no less than of mortal pain, and made a standard, about which the hottest battle has been given, the sign in which the most glorious victories have been wrought? If theology has made a grievous mistake in substituting a doctrine for a living reality, a philosophy of atonement for a story of the Cross, let us at least recognize that it has fallen into this mistake naturally, in the endeavour to put into a form in which the intellect might see it that truth which faith only can perceive, and the perception of which is necessary to convert the Cross into a standard and the scene of apparent ignominy into one of Divine glory.

For the glory is not in the Cross, nor in the Crucifixion, but in the Crucified One. Art has endeavoured to represent this by placing a halo around the Sufferer's head. The power of the story lies in the power of a Divine Personality to redeem any place and transform any scene. The doctrine of the Atonement has no significance, and indeed no possibility, except as a part of the larger doctrine of the Incarnation. The history which leaves the Crucifixion in and takes out the Miraculous Conception and the Resurrection thrusts the death and passion back into a mere prosaic execution of an innocent man, or at best a mere persecution of a sainted martyr. The story of the Cross derives all its significance from the contrast between Him who hung upon it and the indignity heaped upon Him. The New Testament writers never pile agony upon agony in a vain attempt to arouse our sympathies for a dying martyr. Their descriptions of it are simple; their after references to it are of the very briefest. But they habitually bring before the mind the character and mission of the Crucified. "Ye denied the Holy One and Just," says Peter, "and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath

raised from the dead." Paul even more significantly indicates that which faith has perceived, which when perceived transforms the story of the Cross from one of ignominy to one of glory: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and, being formed in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

I do not wonder that scepticism finds the Cross a stumbling-block and a rock of offence, that to the Greek it was and still is foolishness. I do not wonder that the doctrine of the Cross is doubted, disbelieved, or even derided. I think that often we believe it because we do not believe it; we agree to it because we do not fully take it in. Go out this evening, look up into the stellar glory of an autumn sky, see its myriad worlds, endeavour to imagine the vastness of Him who has scattered all these diamonds on this shore of blue, the wisdom of Him who has appointed the trackless paths on this ocean of blue for this illuminated fleet under whose sailing orders they never conflict, never become entangled; recall the Scripture declaration that by Jesus Christ were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers—all things were created by Him and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist; endeavour to realize that He, the Creator, Upholder, Ruler of all the worlds was cradled in a manger, lived as a man among men, suffered in Gethsemane, was thorn-crowned and spit upon and derided, and was finally crucified; put these two aspects of His life together, and stand before them and take them fully in—and either your intellect will revolt against the doctrine, and you will cry out, It cannot be, the Greek in you will rise up against it and condemn it as "foolishness," or all the spirit of love and reverence in you will bow down and worship before the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, whose

judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out. Or unroll the scroll of human history, read the story of the evolution of the race, see how through stumbling and darkness, and many wanderings and many retrogressions, it has been steadily led upward and onward to higher and yet higher levels, see how nations have been built up and torn down, and civilizations constructed, and, when they had fulfilled their purposes, suffered to fall into decay ; and read those other Scripture testimonies which represent the Son as taking this nation for His inheritance, and dashing the other rebellious and resisting nation in pieces as a potter's vessel, as guiding the willing and destroying the obstinate and recalcitrant ; and then imagine Him, the Lord of all, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, entering life through a stable and going out of it through a cross and a tomb—and either you will refuse the belief which thus exalts the God of history by such a humiliation, or you will be lost in wonder, love, and praise at the marvellousness of His condescending love.

In studying, then, the simple story of the Cross, do not try to make it effective on your heart by imagining the cruel and prolonged sufferings of the Crucified. Study Him who hung upon the Cross, and seek to comprehend the paradox of human history which Watts has stated with an audacity of faith :

When God the mighty Maker died
For man the creature's sin.

A NEW NATIONAL PARTY.

THE speech of Mr. Gladstone at Sir Joseph Pease's struck a note which will find a cordial response in the hearts of his followers. There are numbers who have grown weary of the talk about a reunion which has been continually fading further and further into a future so distant that it has become increasingly doubtful whether any of the host now wandering in the wilderness would ever reach the pro-

mised land. The endeavours to reconcile the two sections of what so recently was a great and triumphant party were natural enough, and up to a certain point commendable. But that point has been passed, and to continue them after it has become clear that they must be futile would only be to encourage the Dissident chiefs in the belief that they are indispensable, and that belief would itself be the most fatal hindrance to reunion. They are more likely to reconsider their position when they see that the Liberal party is confident of its own strength to settle the question even despite their resistance, and is determined to hold on its own course, leaving it for them to decide whether they will resume their place in the army of progress or definitely unite themselves with that party which, whatever be the modification in its policy, remains the champion of class privileges and of those vested rights which mean public and national wrongs.

The bold utterance of Mr. Gladstone was the more opportune because of the manifest signs of discontent with their own position which are to be found in the speeches and writings of the Unionists. The speeches of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill, following so quickly upon each other and showing so close an agreement as to the necessity of creating a great National party, which was to hold the two extremes, in order was the first kite sent up, and it has been followed by others even of a more pronounced character. The speeches of leaders must necessarily be guarded. It is to the less responsible members of the party that we must look for suggestions as to the secret feelings which are likely to inspire its policy. It is not from Mr. Chamberlain but rather from one of that faithful company of adherents from Birmingham that we should expect some hints as to the "true inwardness" of the extraordinary allies by whom the Tory ministry is supported, and to whom we are indebted for what a very calm but well-informed Liberal, who has every opportunity for watching the movements of the political world from the inside, described as the most reactionary Parliament we have known since 1832.

One of these gentlemen—according to a correspondent of our own in the district, possibly Mr. Powell Williams, who recently left the Liberation Society because a speaker at one of its meetings had condemned Mr. Chamberlain's attitude towards Welsh Disestablishment; or Mr. Jesse Collings, according to a report quoted in *The Spectator*; or possibly some third person—has given his views of the situation in a letter to *The Birmingham Post*. There is nothing profound or original or novel in the communication, nor can it have the significance which it might have possessed in those brighter days when Birmingham led the Radicalism of the nation. But it is an index to the secret thought of the Radical Unionists, and if we are to judge by it they are tired of propping up a Government which only flounders out of one blunder to plunge into another. No man knows better than Mr. Chamberlain the hopelessness of the task to which at present he stands committed. Unionists may vapour in public about the obstructive tactics of the Opposition, but the clear sighted among them cannot fail to perceive that the true obstructives are a Government whose members provoke opposition by their insolence, and justify it by their incapacity; who can neither make concessions with grace nor enforce their decisions with legality; who quibble with their own promises, and with an arrogant pretence to authority, which is supported only by the coercion of Parliament, give an impression of imbecility such as has had no approach to a parallel in any Ministry of our generation. It would be extremely interesting to hear the true views of Mr. Chamberlain and others in relation to the quiet complacency with which Mr. Smith plays the part of Dictator, as though he were the solitary exception to Dr. Thomson's dictum as to infallibility, or the vulgar insolence with which Mr. Matthews abuses the brief authority with which Birmingham Radicalism has invested him, or the cold aristocratic nonchalance with which Mr. Balfour treats the House of Commons *de haut en bas*. We are denied such edifying and instructive revelations, but the writer of the article lets us see that he and his friends are becoming impatient of their parts in the farce which is being

acted at Westminster. Some men have brains and some have office, and the former are beginning to ask why those who have brains should continue to use them for those who take all the spoils but show themselves unequal to the ordinary responsibilities of office. The suggestion is so eminently rational that we have no doubt that the longer it is pondered the more will it commend itself to the gentlemen who are assumed to have the brains, and who, at all events, have been able to do for the Tory party what it could never have done for itself.

The discontent with the existing arrangement, which leaves Liberal Unionists to bear the brunt of the battle while Tories have the rewards, is expressed in an article in *The Fortnightly Review*, which resumes that review of "Home Affairs" that used at one time to be one of the most interesting features in the monthly magazines, but has been discontinued since the savage onslaught on Mr. Gladstone and his followers, with which the present editor signalized his accession to office. Referring to that article, the writer in the July number thus excuses an attack on the aged statesman, whose marvellous powers and passionate devotion to what he believes to be the policy of righteousness are the admiration of all the civilized world, with the exception of our own Unionists, which made us wonder whether our political warfare was sinking to the level of primitive savagery :

We dreaded the impassioned rhetoric, and the power of presenting his case so as to move the populace, which we knew Mr. Gladstone could command. These considerations influenced us so greatly that we took into account, as one of the main factors of the problem, the advanced age of the great protagonist. For this we have been blamed unduly.

It is satisfactory to know that there is some chivalrous feeling left in the Unionist party, so that they are not content to be served after this fashion. Colonel Saunderson, who is one of the most instructive studies in the House of Commons, made a similar reference, but was compelled, by the indignant shouts of "shame" with which it was received, to make a correction, which did more credit to

his ingenuity than his candour. It is to be hoped that among those who protested against Colonel Saunderson's indecent suggestion, as well as among the censors of *The Fortnightly*, there were some Tories. We may assume, indeed, that it is only about Unionist criticism that the editor of *The Fortnightly* would trouble himself, and therefore it may be hoped that among the gentlemen with whom Mr. Chamberlain delights to find himself, there are still some who have not allowed hatred of Mr. Gladstone to stifle the instincts of common humanity. As to "blaming unduly," it is not easy to conceive of any censure which would be in advance of so heinous an offence, not merely against good taste or gentlemanly feeling, but against common decency.

The writer has now arrived at the conviction that Mr. Gladstone is not so potent a force as he supposed, and seems to have a kind of regret that he needlessly compromised himself by writing after the style of a Red Indian rather than an English gentleman. By what strange process of reasoning he has come to believe that Mr. Gladstone's power is gone we know not, but he has now proved that he is as inaccurate as a political observer as he is unfair as a combatant. We attach importance to his paper, not because of its intrinsic merit, but because it seems to be a manifesto of the new National party with which we are threatened. We should be sorry indeed to believe that Mr. Chamberlain has anything to do with the inspiration either of it or its predecessor. Indeed we should look rather to Lord Randolph Churchill as their parent. The leading suggestion of the first one was only an expansion of a phrase in his own address, by which he offended all but those who believe that hatred of Mr. Gladstone covers a multitude of sins. The present article is written chiefly in his interest, to advocate the formation of a National party under the dual leadership of his lordship and Mr. Chamberlain. Apparently, both these statesmen would be gainers by such an arrangement. In reality, the advantage, if any, would be entirely with the chief of the Tory democracy. In such an alliance Lord Randolph

would have his only chance of regaining position, while Mr. Chamberlain would finally break with the forces which have given him his influence, and, having parted with them, would be at the mercy of foes who, however they may flatter and court him for the moment, have no real sympathy with him.

The starting point, however, of the reviewer is evidently discontent with the present Administration, and it is not to be supposed that subsequent events have done anything to correct or modify that feeling. Since that, Mr. Matthews has brought additional discredit on the ministry by sheer insolence. But those who look below the surface, do not fail to see that the Home Secretary could not have done so much mischief but for the absolute incapacity of the leader of the house. Had Mr. W. H. Smith possessed a tithe of the ability of any of his recent predecessors, he would have interposed, and saved the Government from being involved in the disgrace of Mr. Matthews. But Mr. Smith has but one talent, and on this particular occasion it was not available. He can move the closure, and it is about all that he has shown himself able to do, but as it was no use to end a debate if it was to be followed by a hostile division he was helpless. Hence the discomfiture of the Government and the dismay which has spread through the ranks of their supporters. No reasonable man can wonder that the Liberal Unionists, having politicians so able and experienced as Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain at their disposal, should fret and fume under the present mismanagement.

There is one element in the calculations, however, which needs correction. *The Fortnightly* is extremely confident that they have the people behind them. In a tone of exultation it compares the relative force of the contending parties as it is now with what it was twelve months ago. "On the whole," he says, "the opposing forces, we thought, were not unequally matched. Now, as we look again upon the field of home politics, we are struck by the fact that the battle is almost over, and the victory all but won. The right, as we think, has manifestly gained ground all along

the line." We suppose that in political battles audacity counts for something. The Liberal Unionists, at all events, believe it and act upon it. A short time ago, a Liberal met one of the active men of the party, and talking with him as to the extravagant estimates of its success, which were continually put forth, asked him what they meant. "Swagger" was the answer. Well, no doubt, a policy of swagger counts for something. Perhaps it is necessary to revive the drooping spirits of those who employ it; possibly there are waverers whose one desire is to be on the winning side, on whom it may impose. But if it is to accomplish the latter object, it ought to keep up some semblance of probability, for this reckless boasting is a risky weapon for those who have recourse to it. At any moment their folly may be exposed. In the present case the exposure has followed rapidly enough. The writer puts everything on the St. Austell election, conveniently forgetting Liberal successes at Liverpool, Burnley, and Ilkestone. St. Austell was a much more doubtful exception to this law of Liberal progress than "Dissentients" are willing to confess. The division was not contested in 1886, and the diminution of the majority, so far as it was not due to local influence, legitimate and illegitimate, simply marked the extent of the division in the Liberal ranks, but gave no index as to the tendency of opinion during the last twelve months, which is the one point of importance. This was, however, the only fact on which the reviewer based his calculations, unless we are to reckon the unsustained assertion as to the "prodigious success of the Radical Union, which was founded by Mr. Chamberlain, and which is now winning more than fifteen thousand adherents per week." The polls at Spalding, Coventry, and North Paddington are the answers to rhodomontade which only shows the writer's utter incapacity as a political teacher. It is hard to say which of these three elections is the most significant, but there is one feature common to them all, and that is the extraordinary increase of the Liberal vote. If the Radical Union gets fifteen thousand recruits a week, it must be from the Conservative ranks, since it is clear that even

those Liberals who doubted in 1886, are now returning to their allegiance. As Mr. Schnadhorst told us would be the case, the rank and file are settling the question. Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Caine, and others of the same type, may be irreconcileable, but the people whom they expected to lead have refused to follow.

But if the popular force which Radical Unionists were supposed to command is gone, nay, even if there be a suspicion that it has been over-rated, the influence of the leaders in the Tory counsels must necessarily be diminished also. This has been the weakness of the Liberal Unionist position all throughout. From one point of view it might seem as though Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain were masters of the Cabinet, inasmuch as they had only to draw off their forces in order to leave the Government in a hopeless minority. But the Ministry were astute enough to perceive that they were the real masters, for they had only to threaten a dissolution in order to secure the submission of their allies. It has now become even more manifest than before that whoever might gain by a dissolution (and the signs are all in favour of a large Gladstonian gain) the Dissenting Liberals would certainly suffer heavy loss; indeed, would be extinguished as a party. In this state of parties it is not probable that the pleasant suggestions of the Birmingham M.P. or of *The Fortnightly Review* would have been listened to with much sympathy had not the weakness and bungling of the Ministry strengthened the position of the Liberal Unionists and lent additional cogency to the demand that their chiefs should have a leading position in the Government. "Only one thing is needful," the reviewer tells us, "that the Conservatives should place patriotism above party." That is a very large need indeed, and one which, with the intrigues of the spring of 1885 in our memory, does not seem likely to be satisfied. It is at least possible that a true Conservative may believe that he shows his patriotism by adhering to his party. Already there have been signs of dissatisfaction with the consideration for Liberal allies, and if it be found that they have little to bring with them but themselves, that feeling is

certain to become much stronger, and to find very decided expression. If indeed Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, and Sir Henry James would throw themselves into the Tory party, their accession might be hailed with rejoicing. But that is hardly probable. At present, at all events, it is a "National party" which it is desired to form.

A "National party" is an attractive name, and it is advocated on grounds which are very plausible, and might be convincing if we could forget the political history of the country. But any one who will look back but a few years will soon find that, however captivating the "national" name and professions may be, it is not long before their true character is discovered. There is always a danger to great principles in combinations distinctly based upon compromise, and there are sufficient warnings of this peril in the suggestions for this new party, which have already been given to the world. Lord Hartington, who played with the idea in his speech at Blackburn, says: "I cannot say whether the formation of such a party is only a dream which is being indulged by some, or whether it is destined soon to become a reality. . . . Whatever the National party in the future may be, it will be, I venture to say, to a great extent a Liberal party." It may be presumptuous in us to differ from the great Liberal Unionist, but we venture to say in opposition to his view, that whatever else a National party may be it will, in its spirit and essence, be a Tory party. Apparently its inception is due to the divisions of opinion among the Liberal chiefs on Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule policy, but those differences, serious as they undoubtedly are, might have been adjusted had they not been symptomatic of a divergence of opinion apart altogether from the Irish question. The secession of the Whig peers in 1885 was an unmistakeable sign of a separation between the two sections of Liberals which has been growing for years. Disestablishment was then the red rag by which the timid spirits of the party were alarmed, but, in truth, they were just as much disturbed by projects of land law reform; or, to put it more correctly, they were alarmed by the increasing power of democracy. The Irish

question became the question of the hour, not in consequence of any action of Mr. Gladstone's, but by the irresistible force of events, which neither he nor any one else was able to control, and which would keep it where it is until some settlement were reached, even did Mr. Gladstone cease to be an active force in our polities. There are, we suppose, some who are foolish enough to believe that the present imbroglio is the work of one or two men, instead of being the inevitable result of the new conditions of our political life, hastened by the action of circumstances, such as the failure of harvests and fall of prices, which have developed the chronic agrarian difficulty of Ireland in an extremely acute form. But we go further and say, that had there been no Irish difficulty we should still have had Liberal dissensions. They were there in the germ before the last Reform Bill. "The most distinguished publicist in England," says Mr. Grant Duff, "has been recently pointing out that the American people is governed by a far less uncontrolled democracy than that which was installed in power in 1885, not by the single-handed action of the Liberals, but by a combination for that purpose of the two parties." There is the secret of the Liberal schism, there the true explanation of this talk about a new National party. No doubt there were many Radicals who revolted against Mr. Gladstone's proposals, and especially against the Land Bill. But of those in whom was the root of Radicalism many have returned, whereas, on the contrary, those of the Whig type have become more confirmed in their hostility, as they have discovered how much more sympathy they had with Conservatism than even they themselves suspected. To them this idea of a National party—that is, of a party which shall combine moderate and sensible men of all parties to resist innovation—is very attractive. It would save them from the humiliation of having to confess that they had been wrong all their lives, and yet at the same time of gratifying their Tory predilections. Call it by what name you will, this new party would be a combination of the classes, alarmed by the increasing power of the masses, and anxious to interpose some barrier to its advance.

As to its Liberalism, that depends upon the interpretation of that much-abused word. Mr. Grant Duff, who is anxious on his return from India to give us the benefit of his wisdom, of whose infallibility he has never learned to doubt, defines the Liberal party, "using that word, not in its present party sense, but in its old acceptation, as the party which represented the best intelligence of the country." It would not be uncharitable to say that in the judgment of the writer that would be the party most in harmony with Mr. Grant Duff's views. But even when taken in a wider sense, it is not a satisfactory definition. If, indeed, Liberalism cannot commend itself to the intelligence of the country, it speaks badly for the intelligence; but its distinctive feature is not, as we take it, its intellectual superiority, but its broad popular sympathy, its love of righteousness, and consequently its opposition to all legislation in the interest of a class rather than of the nation. Such Liberalism, it is to be feared, would find but little favour in the eyes of a National party of which Lord Randolph Churchill was a conspicuous member, and whose majority was to be mustered by Conservative Whigs.

Mr. Chamberlain, in his speech at Birmingham, suggests the idea of an Eclectic party, and that certainly would not be Liberal. After referring with sympathetic approval to Lord Randolph Churchill's speech at Dartford, he says :

I confess I do not think it altogether improbable that the great social problems and questions of our time which most urgently demand solution should receive satisfactory settlement at the hands of a national party, which should exclude only the extreme section of the party of reaction on the one hand, and the party of anarchy on the other.

This is by far the most significant deliverance on the subject, and it is full of evil omen. Had it come from Lord Hartington it could easily have been understood. His lordship, however, has too much sagacity to believe that the English people, which proverbially hates coalitions, would ever accept the lead of such a party, or regard it as anything but the latest form of Toryism. That Mr. Chamberlain, with the antecedents of the 1885 campaign,

should contemplate the possibility of such a party of compromise is little short of the marvellous. At the earlier period he was the *bête noir* of the "classes," and, even more, of the generation of snobs whose one ambition is to be reckoned among the classes. How is it that he, of all men, has come to believe that the great social reforms of the day will be best settled by a party which will include a considerable, probably a preponderating element of those who "toil not, neither do they spin," and whose chief function in connection with these changes will be to pay large ransom. The change in one or other of these parties lately so fiercely opposed must have been very great before that point was reached. Of the change in Tories of which we hear, we care nothing. The Ethiopian does not change his skin, nor the leopard his spots. The Tory party may promise everything in order to get power, but it never has given and is never likely to give anything that it is able to withhold. It is not about it, but about the Radical section of the party, that we are concerned. What is Mr. Chamberlain going to concede? He is to get rid of an extreme section, which he calls the "party of anarchy." We should like a more precise definition. Does he mean that those of us who have refused to connive at the establishment of a petty despotism in Dublin Castle, which shall suppress the free utterance of opinion on the plea of pulling down, is a party of anarchy? The phrase is too vague. If there is such a party, by all means let it be left outside Liberal combinations to fret and fume in its own isolation. But let us take heed lest, in ostracising a party of anarchy, we should cast out men who love order as much, though probably they love liberty more, than those who place them under the political ban. But this is not a question of men only; it is one of measures also. Are any of the articles of the "Radical programme" to be sacrificed? In 1885 some of us were assailed with intense bitterness because of that programme, though we had neither responsibility for its publication nor sympathy with much that was extravagant in its proposals. If any part of it is to be sacrificed on the shrine of this new Conservatism, yclept Nationalism, we are

entitled, at least, to ask, what it is. Free land, free church, free schools, were once held to be essential to the right solution of these great social problems. Will the Tory section of the alliance consent to these? If not, we know what to think of the new party. It is, however, sufficiently condemned by the fact that Lord Randolph Churchill is one of its chiefs. Lord Randolph as a social reformer is too grotesque a joke. No doubt his lordship is exceedingly smart, but he has yet to convince the world that he is anything more than a clever political trickster. Mr. Chamberlain will do wisely to think once, twice, thrice, before he commits himself to an alliance which can have only one issue. In the meantime we cannot too strongly emphasize Sir George Trevelyan's warning that the very existence of Liberalism is at stake in the present controversy. Whether it be intended or not, the formation of this new National party would be nothing less than a deadly blow levelled at the party of progress to which we owe the great reforms of the present century. As Sir George Trevelyan puts it, it is the suppression of the Liberal party. It is more easy to understand how some able politicians may desire the formation of a National party, than to see where it is likely to find its supporters. English people know Tories and Liberals. It will be a long time before they are prepared to rally to a new and entirely unknown standard. True Liberals will certainly not approve the men who have subjected their leader and their party to discredit, and we have utterly failed to understand the spirit of thorough-going Tories if they will easily reconcile themselves to a Government of superior persons such as this new National party is supposed to establish.

There is, too, another conviction which is daily gathering strength, and which is certain to tell still more decidedly against them. It is well expressed in a letter received from an unsophisticated Liberal in a remote part of the country where Unionism won some of its most signal successes in 1886, but where it is just as likely to sustain serious reverses at the next election.

Mr. Jesse Collings was in this neighbourhood a few weeks since

I had a long talk with him. My Home Rule creed remains intact notwithstanding. The impression, however, left upon my mind, and I fear it is the solution of a great deal of the present difficulty, was this—in the minds of a great many Radicals there exists not an objection to Home Rule as such, but an intense hatred of Mr. Gladstone.

As this feeling spreads there will spread with it a resolute determination to defeat such malignity.

If we are told that this opposition to Mr. Gladstone is only devotion to the Union, and that this is the keystone of the new party, we are not the more impressed by the wisdom of its statesmanship. There are considerations, far transcending any party interests, which make the determination to quench the aspirations of Ireland one of the most perilous which any statesman could adopt, and one to which no true patriot would commit himself. It is not necessary to adopt the extreme view of our military and naval administration which Lord Randolph Churchill propounded at Wolverhampton, or even to acquiesce in the alarmist suggestions of Sir Charles Dilke in his estimates of the European situation, to make us feel that we cannot afford to have a discontented Ireland. He must, however, be a confirmed optimist who would undertake to say that we may not suddenly and unexpectedly find ourselves at war. The danger may not be immediate, but Russia is engaged in a course of aggression which may at any moment bring her into collision with us, while France certainly regards us with no friendly eye, and would not be sorry to take advantage of our embarrassments. To speak in the most moderate way, the British Empire is the object of a sufficient number of jealousies and hatreds among the nations, and has so weighty a burden of responsibilities resting upon her that her rulers may well desire to have her undivided strength free and ready for any emergency. This cannot be while the present strained relations with Ireland continue. The question how this evil is to be cured is one about which true Liberals ought not to quarrel. If Mr. Gladstone were determined to force on a particular

mode of settlement, those who believed it to be more perilous even than the continuance of the present unrest and agitation might be justified in opposing it, even to the extent of excluding him from office. That was the view of the dissentients when they voted against the second reading of the Home Rule Bill. It was an extreme measure, and, in our judgment, was not warranted, but there was room for difference of opinion even among true Liberals so long as it and the Land Bill were before the country. But now these Bills are cleared out of the way, and the man who, instead of showing his willingness to co-operate in the formulation of another scheme, holds aloof on the plea that he does not know what that scheme will be, and in the meantime lavishes his praises and sympathy on a Tory Government has no claim to be regarded as a Liberal. The difference is no longer about Home Rule proposals, and as the new phase of the controversy is better understood, sound Liberals will feel that their proper place must be with the old standard and under the old leader. The evidence of this is to be found in the returns of all the recent elections.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THERE have been of late some remarkable manifestations of Christian brotherhood in the action of some of the Anglican clergy towards their Dissenting neighbours, which stand out in striking contrast to the action in Convocation of which Canon Gregory seems to have been the inspirer. The proposal for an appendix to the Church Catechism, which we have so long been taught to regard as having an authority only second to that of revelation, but whose deficiencies are now proclaimed by those who would once fain have forced it into all our schools, and still more the speeches made in its support, were calculated to accentuate the difference between Churchmen and Dissenters. The action taken in many places in connection with the

Jubilee celebration, on the contrary, appeared designed to proclaim to the world our essential unity both as Christians and Englishmen. Dissenting ministers were even invited to take part in the service so far as it was legally permissible; that is, to read the lessons, while the clergyman preached. Probably it is not too much to suppose that, had the law allowed, this exhibition of fraternal courtesy might have been carried still further, and the Dissenting minister have been invited to occupy the pulpit. Ah! but there's the rub. The law does not allow—that is to say, the State Church stands in the way of that catholic communion which would be welcomed on both sides. A like remark is suggested by the Cheshunt College anniversary, at which there were so many clergymen present as to make Dissenting alarmists, if such people there be, ask whether they might possibly indulge some hope of annexing the institution. Cheshunt, indeed, is not a denominational college, but it is right to add that no college is doing better work for the Congregational churches. The presence of the clergy at its anniversary was therefore an act of friendship and full of significance. Still it was certainly open to Dr. Parker's criticisms. Those criticisms, however, were directed against the system, not the men. Of course it is extremely inconsistent to encourage the education of Dissenting ministers as Archdeacon Farrar did by his genial presence and his eloquent words, and then to refuse to interchange pulpits with them when they have been educated. But the responsibility is on the law, not on the Archdeacon. Our kindly feelings towards those clergymen who seem desirous to efface the distinction which separates men who are servants of the same Divine Lord and preachers of the same gospel of the grace of God, must not make us indifferent to the action of the law or less earnest in seeking that change without which there cannot be that equality and consequently no catholic fellowship.

The Speaker has nobly asserted the dignity of his own office and saved the House of Commons from a blunder

which would have lowered its reputation which, to speak frankly, has already fallen to a sufficiently low level. It is high time for plain speaking on this subject. No sensible man can have a word of apology for such rude violence as that by which Dr. Tanner has more than once disgraced himself and vexed the wiser and more respected members of his own party. But when it is assumed that all the Nationalists are like Dr. Tanner, and that they are the only offenders against the better traditions of the House, and that on them the entire blame rests for the deterioration of Parliamentary manners, a gross injustice is done. The Irish party includes many men of bearing as courteous even as the "gentlemen" of the House, while among these "gentlemen" are not a few whose conduct is hardly less reprehensible than that of Dr. Tanner. The behaviour of these "young bloods" to Mr. Gladstone is discreditable and disgraceful in the last degree, and there is no excuse for them such as might be urged in behalf of Irishmen fighting an uphill battle and infuriated by the suggestion so continually repeated, that they are the friends of assassins and at heart assassins themselves. Dr. Tanner sinned grievously, but no one can read the reports without an uneasy suspicion that he was first goaded to passion which became ungovernable, and that a different measure would have been meted out to him as an Irishman from that which an Englishman would have received. Indeed, Mr. W. H. Smith, whose conduct throughout was a perfect illustration of how not to do it, said almost as much. Lord Hartington unhappily added another to the many proofs that Unionism has so twisted his judgment that he cannot be fair to an Irishman. In the unique position he occupies he might have interposed as a mediator, but he spoke as a heated partisan who only added fresh fuel to the flame. If the horror which his lordship and the Tory party expressed of profane swearing can only be so extended that the practice shall come to be regarded as vulgar and degrading in Englishmen as well as Irishmen the gain will be some compensation for a very shameful episode.

A clever caricature in *Punch* represents the pitiable condition to which a Government, apparently very strong, has been suddenly reduced by a single incident which, as compared with the grave matters of public policy, might seem of very trivial importance. As an apple falling from a tree struck down a strong man, so has the case of Miss Cass inflicted a defeat upon the administration, under which it is still reeling. It was high time that defeat and humiliation were inflicted upon it, if only to teach it that even a Government which lives on because some of its professed opponents dare not put it in a minority cannot afford wantonly to outrage public opinion. Lord Hartington and his friend have introduced an unconstitutional novelty of the most dangerous kind and evil precedent. In their determination to prevent Mr. Gladstone's return to office they have refused to give any vote which would imperil the safety of a Ministry which so admirably answers their purpose. The constitutional check on bad administration has thus been neutralized. Happily Mr. Matthews managed to exhaust the patience of these strange allies, and the crutch failed at a most critical time. It is to the infinite credit of our Parliament, and does something to restore our faith in the working of our institutions, that the insolence of the Home Secretary, which has been fostered by the impunity he has enjoyed, aroused a feeling of resistance which all the persuasions of the Whips and all the influences of party attachment were unable to repress. Some who had quietly accepted the curtailment of the liberties of the entire Irish people, could not brook the wrong done to an English milliner. Mr. Newton is evidently a magistrate of somewhat arbitrary temper, but we would infinitely rather trust him than the half-pay officers and "detrimentals," to whose tender mercies have been handed over the liberties of the Irish people. Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Caine, strange to say, take a different view. They supported Irish coercion, but they are shocked at the wrongs of Miss Cass. We are thankful that even that has disquieted them. We cannot, however, separate Mr. Matthews from his colleagues, nor can we

forget to whom we are indebted for this reactionary Government. Mr. W. H. Smith, who will for ever be remembered as the leader whose one function was to move "that this question be now put;" Mr. Balfour, the minister who treated the duties of his office as something beneath him with his sympathetic subordinate, Colonel King Harman; and Mr. Matthews, who snubs with wonderful impartiality the representatives of Welsh Dissenters and Irish Nationalists, are blessings which this nation owes to Liberal Unionists. It is some consolation to find that they will not be allowed to work their sweet will for ever. In every respect the feeling which has been aroused by the shameful indignity put upon Miss Cass is satisfactory. Apart from the political significance of the vote in the House of Commons there are moral aspects of the subject of the highest importance. At present there is a great deal of talk which could well be spared, but out of the present chaos of opinion it may be hoped that we shall at length reach substantial agreement as to some mode of removing the scandal in Regent Street, out of which this whole trouble has grown. It is, at all events, satisfactory to find that public opinion is being aroused about evils which respectability has been too ready to pass by, and that the shameless injustice of the different treatment of the two sexes is being recognized.

Is it the intention of the Government to turn Wales into another Ireland? Whatever their purpose, that certainly is the result to which their infatuated policy is tending. We have said little about the anti-tithe campaign as it is called in the slang of the day, because it was so difficult to get at the actual facts, and we were content to wait the issue of an official inquiry. But about the recent proceedings there is no such uncertainty, and we do not hesitate, therefore, to express our opinion. Whatever may be said about the lawlessness of the opposition to the tithe collectors, Englishmen of all parties would desire that the accused should have a fair trial. But this is precisely what the

Government are unable to see. The Attorney-General has changed the venue, thus entailing upon the prisoners, working men with small wages—an enormous increase of cost. The hardships inflicted upon these poor men, who were first dragged miles from their own homes to be examined by magistrates who refused to hear their witnesses, have produced such an impression upon Mr. Osborne Morgan that he made a speech which must have astonished the House as much as it disturbed the equanimity of the Law Officers of the Crown. Sir Edward Clarke gave such expression to his irritated feelings as to call down upon himself the condemnation of the Speaker, who, to say the least, is never too ready to rebuke Ministerial offenders. Sir Edward has no sympathy with the people, and is ever prepared to use his artillery of polished satire or angry invective for the class whose champion he has become. He is the type of one of the most offensive orders of politicians. The aristocrat who has been born in the purple and trained in the traditions of an exclusive order may be forgiven a little of the hauteur which is hereditary and congenital. But the acquired insolence of one who owes everything to the Liberalism which has made his career possible, and whose only claim to distinction is the success which he has achieved as an advocate, is insufferable. This is what we always feel in relation to the Solicitor-General. We do not doubt that his Toryism is sincere, but with its arrogance, its petty narrowness, its affectation of superior loyalty and goodness, its contempt for men better than himself, whose only fault is that they are not of his Church or his party, it is intolerable. It is a melancholy fate which brings Welsh Dissenters within the power of him or his worthy superior, Sir Richard Webster. The Attorney-General has shown by his Marriage Bill that he knows nothing about Nonconformity. Sir Edward Clarke hardly attempts to conceal his aversion to them. The attack of the latter upon Mr. Osborne Morgan was sheer impertinence, and suggested that the speaker must have forgotten for the moment that he was not pleading at the bar of the Old Bailey. The wisdom of provoking the Welsh to frenzy is

more than doubtful. They are strong themselves, as Colonel Cornwallis West will find if he is more careful to please his Unionist allies than to satisfy his constituents, and they have powerful friends. One cause of the present difficulty is the refusal of the Lords-lieutenants of counties where almost all the people are Dissenters, to appoint Dissenting magistrates; but in vain have the Government been appealed to on the subject. It is impossible that this can last, and it will be well if a wiser, because a juster, policy be adopted before feeling becomes more exasperated.

The humiliation of the Government proceeds as rapidly as any reasonable opponent can desire. After the surrender on the Irish Land Bill, they are only objects of pity. What they have protested they could not and would not do they have done, and have not even been able so to do it as to hide their annoyance or to break their defeat. Surely never was Prime Minister in a more pitiable plight than that of Lord Salisbury at the Carlton. He had to retreat from an untenable position, and the difficulty was increased by the fact that only a few days ago his ablest lieutenant had declared that it must be held at any cost. What was even worse, he could not even pretend that he was himself satisfied as to the wisdom or necessity of the movement. All he could say was that it had been ordered by the masters of the situation. To refuse would have been to give Mr. Gladstone another opportunity, and that is the one thing which no good Unionist can contemplate. The statement was cynical enough to be worthy of Lord Robert Cecil, but it was perfectly true. Of course Mr. Gladstone would dissolve and a dissolution with Ilkestone, Spalding, Coventry, North Paddington, Brixton, Basingstoke, fresh in memory is not to be thought of. Liberals can wait. They have only to go on educating opinion, and they may safely trust to the blunders of the Government to do the rest.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Frederick Hazzleden. A Novel. By HUGH WESTBURY. Three Volumes. (Macmillan and Co.) We do not know whether this is Mr. Westbury's first book; but if it be, it is one of considerable promise. Whether Mr. Westbury is ever likely to be great as a weaver of plots and teller of tales may be open to doubt, and at all events it is not in the interest of the story that the chief merit of "Frederick Hazzleden" lies; but of his keenness of observation, his cleverness in delineation of character, and his skill in the vivid presentation of certain phases of our modern life, this book contains abundant proofs. It might, perhaps, be objected to it that the story is little more than a thread on which to hang the author's views on certain questions or his sketches of men and manners, and it is one that it would not be easy to reply to. It is, however, fair to say that though the story is comparatively slight, it nowhere shocks our sense of probability, nor is it deficient in real interest. Fred. Hazzleden, indeed, has but little of the hero in his character, and his treatment of his trusting cousin sometimes makes us a little angry. This feeling, however, is satisfied by the trouble in which he entangles himself, and which justice pronounces only the fitting reward of his weakness and vacillation. The author might indeed very fairly plead that he had no idea of writing a romance or making a hero, and that his intention simply was to give a picture of life as it is, in which the actors should have that mingling of strength and weakness which we find in most men. Looked at in this light, the book is a distinct success. Fred. Hazzleden is a young man of spirit and promise, with Liberal views and kindly sympathies, who seeks to enter Parliament in order that he may do good and loyal service to the cause of the nation and of progress, but who has a very narrow escape from wrecking both his personal happiness and political career by an entanglement into which he was drawn with two Irish conspirators. It is hardly necessary to show how many openings may be made in the course of a story like this for the expression of an author's opinions or the exercise of any special gifts for portraiture or caricature which he may possess. The story of the election, for example, is very cleverly told, and brings out without any great exaggeration the manifest weaknesses of any system of political organization. The sketch also of the Dissenting congregation at Mostyn Mount is one from which some valuable hints might be gathered. Of course it is a satire, but it is a satire which is not unfriendly, and which hits off with considerable felicity certain peculiarities against which it is well for congregations, and especially for those in fashionable suburbs, to be on their guard.

"Mostyn Mount Chapel was crowded with earnest Philistines, Sunday after Sunday while Mr. Robinson, with a gentle and insinuating eloquence, expounded the doctrines of Philistinism. By sheer force of

character he made his congregation what they were. He was their model and their hero. It followed, of course, that the strength and weakness of the pastor were reflected in the flock. He, too, was a liberal theologian. In the course of a sermon he was once heard to say, 'Paul remarks, but I do not fully agree with him,' and a thrill of pleasure and admiration ran through his silent hearers. They felt, no doubt, a delightful sense of the naughty daring of the observation ; they knew that if Mr. Robinson and they had not been 'broad,' it would have been downright wicked to question the *ex cathedra* declarations of an apostle ; but being 'broad,' they recognized their full right to argue a point with the prophets, the apostles, or even the evangelists, and yet at the same time nursed the conviction of their own temerity. Mr. Robinson probably entertained no such ideas and sensations. He was fond, in his quiet way, of calling a spade a spade, and if an unfortunate apostle had happened to make a feeble observation, Mr. Robinson would bestow upon that unfortunate apostle a severe castigation. He had his favourites and his pet aversions. At one time he was very hard upon David, and the deacons and elders and the adult members of the congregation were also very hard upon David. Wherever you went, for weeks and months, you heard nothing but stern reprobation of the peccadilloes of the Jewish monarch. No one had a good word to say for him, and outside hearers, in the end, began to excuse the little weaknesses of David, out of sheer weariness of hearing them condemned from the pulpit on the Sunday, and by the people all the week."

This is not only smart, but suggestive, especially as coming, not from a champion of orthodoxy, but from one standing on the outside who seems to be impressed with the exquisite humour of this new type of "liberal" preaching. Apparently one object of this book was to promote a more kindly mode of looking at the Irish question. Without making the subject too prominent, the writer manages, if not to awaken sympathy, at least to suggest some extenuation even for Irish conspirators. He brings out with terrible vividness the ghastly consequence of their nefarious enterprise, but at the same time he is able to make allowance for the violent passion which is the result of the wrongs to which the people have been subjected.

Sermons on Subjects from the Old Testament. By JAMES RUSSELL WOODFORD, D.D. Edited by HERBERT MORTIMER LUCKOCK, D.D. (Rivingtons.) Dr. Luckock tells us in his preface that Dr. Woodford is one deservedly ranked among the first preachers of his time, and yet it seems that the Bishop himself has of late years frequently declined invitations to preach from a belief that his style is out of date. As to mere literary style, indeed, these sermons deserve very high praise. The language is chaste, simple, and impressive. It is rather the subject matter for which unpopularity is anticipated. In the opinion both of himself and his editor, the current has set strongly

against definite dogmatic preaching, and in favour of appeals of a more subjective character. Whether such an allegation can be sustained or not, and we are certainly not disposed to accept it without examination, we do not think that this is the kind of objection to which Dr. Woodford's sermons are open. Definite dogmatic teaching in our view would mean clear exposition and enforcement of the grand doctrines of Christianity. We do not say that these are not found in the sermons before us, but the definite dogmatic teaching which is presented in them is that distinctive of Anglicanism. The sermons before us are all on Old Testament subjects, and are largely devoted to an illustration of the typical character of Old Testament story. Dr. Woodford tells us in one place that "the main distinction between the Israelitish history and every other lies, we think, in its close connection with the life, the ministry, the present government of the Lord Jesus Christ. Eternal principles of equity, great laws of the moral world, are again and again illustrated by all history. The history of the Jews is full of Jesus Christ. He interpenetrates every part. Common circumstances seem to receive just such a colouring as makes them finger-posts pointing to Him. Some little incident gives to an otherwise ordinary occurrence a definite, Christian aspect. It is not that ingenious minds have turned these things into allegories. The secret is deeper than this." This idea of the Old Testament runs through a large number of the sermons. The Bishop finds types everywhere, and at whatever the point at which he starts, we are pretty sure before the sermon ends to find ourselves in the presence of the Church of England, its grand national position, its comprehensive character, its high descent, its mystic sacraments. Whether it be the history of the Feast of Tabernacles, or the loathing of light bread by the discontented people, or the passing over Jordan, or Zechariah's vision of the children playing in the streets of the city, we are still led back to the same theme. There are some sermons of a different character, full of fine spiritual thought, put often in eloquent and touching language, among which we may name that on "Man's Yearning for Safety satisfied in a Personal God," and that on the gentleness of God, and others. But this continual preaching of the Church and of the sacraments which is so prominent with Bishop Woodford, and not with him only, but with other episcopal preachers, becomes not a little wearisome, and all the more so when it is done by means of overstrained figures and metaphors. Take, *e.g.*, the sixteenth sermon preached for the Woodard schools, based on the text in Zechariah, "The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." It is fair enough to treat this as a figurative illustration of the comprehensiveness of the Church of Christ, but it is a figure only, not a prophecy, as the Bishop describes it. Here is his explanation.

"The work of Christ, therefore, the prophecy tells, should be not the formation of a school of philosophy, not the founding of a college of Rabbis who might give up their lives to the investigation of truths of

abstract science and interminable speculations ; but the setting up of a kingdom which should comprehend every department of human life —those from whom the capacity for any great mental exertion had perished, down to those across whose yet unopened minds the mighty procession of so many thoughts had not yet begun to sweep. It is here that the work of Jesus Christ stands alone. There have not been wanting from time to time a Plato, a Socrates, a Gamaliel, to gather about them disciples who should sit at their feet and drink in their words. Not one of these masters of the schools ever proposed to himself the task of laying his hands upon a nation at once, and casting his mantle over an entire people. But this was Christ's design." It is interesting to observe how quietly the ideas are here slipped in. We begin with a simple prophetic picture of the restoration of Israel, and find ourselves, we hardly know how, landed in the theory of a national church. We should hardly describe this as being definite dogmatic teaching. This mode of using the Old Testament is eminently unsatisfactory. So long, however, as the records of the past are simply employed as illustrations, though ideas are drawn out of them which certainly were never originally in them, we are not disposed to make any very serious complaint about what after all is only an excess of ingenuity. Canon Melville was a prominent offender in this matter, and the example which he set has been observed by imitators who, as might be expected, have often gone far in excess of himself. It becomes, however, more serious when, as in the case before us, we have the introduction of a distinct prophetic aim, and an attempt to build up a great ecclesiastical system on a foundation so shadowy.

The Expositor. Third Series. Vol. V. (Hodder and Stoughton.) "The Expositor" sustains in every sense its high character. The subjects are sufficiently varied, and they are dealt with by men of proved competence. Among the most suggestive papers are those on the Origin of the Christian Ministry. Dr. Sanday first expounds and criticises the theories of Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Hatch, and Dr. Harnack. Dr. Harnack, in restating and vindicating his own views, writes with great clearness, force, and fulness of information. Mr. Goss, who was one of the first to break a lance with Dr. Hatch, writes in a more conservative sense. The papers in which Dr. Westcott brings out some lessons from the Revised Version of the New Testament are worthy of his own distinguished reputation, and no higher compliment need be paid. Dr. Maclaren, in his closing lectures on the Epistle to the Colossians, and the additional ones on the Epistle to Philemon, maintains to the end the interest which this exposition has awakened. Prof. Driver's notes on difficult texts cannot fail to be valuable to intelligent students of the Bible. Altogether the volume maintains the high character of its predecessors.

Expository Discourses. By SAMUEL COX, D.D. Third Series. We

place this volume next to the *Expositor*, inasmuch as it suggests how much the Christian public has gained by Dr. Cox's release from editorial duties. We cannot be insensible to the great service which he rendered to the Church in the establishment of the "*Expositor*," but we are bound to add that he is, in our judgment, doing a still greater work by these annual volumes of his own discourses. Dr. Cox has a rare faculty for getting at the heart of truth, and he is equally felicitous in giving us the results of this spiritual insight. Take, *e.g.*, such sentences as the following: "St. Paul said that the Law was added to the Promise because of unbelief. May not we say that the Gospel was added to the Law because of disobedience?" Probably the same idea as to the work of the gospel has often been presented before. We do not remember to have met it anywhere in such vivid and striking form. As it is with individual sentences, so is it with the entire treatment of subjects. Thus the four sermons grouped together under the general heading of "*The Charter of Individualism*," are a very striking illustration of the way in which the intelligent study of Scripture as a whole, and not in separate passages, help in the elucidation of what otherwise might be obscure in the reconciliation of apparent discrepancies, and in a clearer perception of the will of God as revealed in His word. The more we examine this volume the more are we impressed, not simply with the power of the separate discourses, but with the immense advantage which a congregation enjoys from this systematic exposition. There is great originality in Dr. Cox's mode of treatment, in the principles on which he arranges his groups of sermons, in his discussion of separate points. But the great value of the discourses is that in the deepest and truest sense they are expository. More useful volumes to ministers could not easily be found, for they are striking examples of a mode of instruction as likely to be profitable as it will be full of interest and inspiration.

Electricity and its Uses. By J. MUNRO. (R. T. S.) With Numerous Engravings. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged. This is a popular treatise on a subject of much general interest and great practical importance. The science of electricity, though still in its infancy, has made vast strides of late years, and the increased knowledge of it that has been acquired by those who have devoted themselves to its study has been turned to practical account in the telephone, the electric light, the electric railway, and other useful inventions. The present volume is an attempt to give the general reader an account of the most recent advances that have been made both in the science and in its application.—*Sunset Glories: or, An Abundant Entrance into the Everlasting Kingdom*, Compiled by E. A. L., has been written with the view of confirming the faith of God's children, by showing "how wonderfully the Saviour has helped and strengthened His servants in the hour of nature's weakness."